

REPORT OF THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE TO THE REGULAR October 2012 SENATE

FOR INFORMATION

Eighteen-month follow-up from ACAPLAN's recommendations from the Undergraduate Program Review for the following program: English and the Library.

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 writes 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 recommendations and commendations of ACAPLAN Following the Undergraduate Program Reviews:

English

Recommendations and Commendations of ACAPLAN following the Undergraduate Program Review: English

The English Department's self-study was completed by the Chair, Dr. Patricia Brace, in the spring of 2010 and in April, Professor Gordon Johnston (Trent University) arrived on campus to head the review. Afterwards, Professor Johnston spent considerable time at Georgian College examining the program there and then produced the most comprehensive evaluation of a Georgian program that ACAPLAN has ever received. In late May he submitted his report and in it noted that the general impression of the review team was that Laurentian's English Department is a "hard-working, articulate, collegial group of talented academic colleagues, dedicated to its teaching and research, and doing well in difficult circumstances." He added that the Department is "well positioned and well qualified to articulate the crucial role of the humanities in the university and in society more widely." In October, Dr. Brace, in consultation with her colleagues, submitted the Department's reaction to the external review.

In preparing its commendation and recommendations, ACAPLAN has changed past practice and, per the new IQAP Policy, has reformatted its comments so that they are clearly targeted to the group that can actually implement any recommendation. While ACAPLAN can only expect a report from the Department in 18 months on how it dealt with the recommendations directed to it, ACAPLAN hopes that any other group referenced in this assessment will also report within the same time-frame, in this case, September 2012. After review, ACAPLAN will table the report s it has received at Senate.

I. Sudbury Program

The Department Student Issues

1. Commendations
 - a. Faculty are available and approachable.
 - b. The Department has been active recruiting students into the program from area secondary schools.
 - c. The Department has begun to address the problem of student advising by building an advising session about the program into every section of ENGL 1705. Further the Department has also assigned the responsibility for advising to a full-time member. Others interested in advising are also encouraged to participate.
2. Recommendations
 - a. Other opportunities for providing program advice should be explored as well, and the Department should consider coordinating such efforts with the Student Success office.
 - b. To resolve the problem of syllabuses, some of which are “unwieldy not to say unreadable” the Department should create a template with spaces provided for essential information to use, at least as a guideline, in the creation of syllabuses.

FOLLOWUP:

- a. The department has developed an advising system that attaches a faculty member to each of the sections of ENGL 1705. This faculty member is introduced to the class in the fall term and returns in the winter, in conjunction with a presentation on the programs, to provide students with contact information. This faculty member is then responsible for these students for the duration of their undergraduate careers. Each year, faculty members add a new first-year group to their contact lists and send reminders to the groups about advising, the publication of the tentative timetable for the next year, etc. We believe that it has improved consistency and continuity of advising for students. However, with the rapidly decreasing complement of full-time faculty this system may not be workable for very much longer.
- b. The department has developed a template for the syllabus, which has a consistent front page with a schedule of classes on the verso. Faculty may then attach another document that contains other kinds of information they would like students to be aware of. A copy of the template is attached.

Program Issues

1. Commendations
 - a. The ELIT and ERMS streams are a distinctive feature of the Laurentian program which “clearly enriches and broadens the experience of students in many ways.”
 - b. The recent rationalizing of course numbers is a distinct improvement and provides an advantage in advising so long as students are able to understand the importance of the digits.
 - c. The Department has started to address some of the problems with ENGL 1705 by holding meetings attended by course instructors and facilitated by a full-time member of the Department.

d. The Department integrates qualified graduate students into the undergraduate program in such areas as writing skills and advising.

2. Recommendations

a. To increase the coherence and consistency of objectives, syllabuses, and method of evaluation in the required first year course (ENGL 1705), the Department should also consider assigning a full-time member of the Department to teach a section of the course, to coordinate planning and overseeing the teaching

b. The Department should consider requiring a co-ordinated course in Critical Theory in the third year of the program. If it remains at the fourth-year level, it should be given more coherence, and there should be agreement among the instructors about its objectives, including an acknowledgement that its students are coming from both streams.

c. The Department as a whole should consider what the ideal balance might be between generalized and specialised courses in the four groups and what the appropriate number of Honours Seminars might be.

d. The Department's Curriculum Committee should create a three-year plan of course offerings, to be updated every year. The plan should outline at least which of the group courses might be offered in any of the three years and as much as possible which of the electives.

FOLLOW-UP

a. Given that our full-time faculty complement will have fallen to an all-time low of 6 members by January 2013, we do not have a faculty member available to undertake this task.

b. We are still considering this recommendation.

c. We are unsure about the goal of this recommendation. The choice of courses in a given group is often determined by faculty availability. Given that we have typically offered four Honours Seminars each year (capped at 25 students, so not really seminars at all), of which students need to take two, we feel that there is adequate choice. That the Honours Seminars were fully subscribed in 2011-12 indicates that fewer seminars would not be feasible.

d. It is very hard to develop a three-year plan with a highly unstable faculty complement. Course offerings now depend significantly on the availability of sessional faculty and the Dean's budget for funding sessional faculty. These conditions change annually, typically not in the direction of largesse. The number of credits the department is able to offer is in fairly steady decline. For 2012-13, timetable changes were being made into early June and two courses had to be cancelled because nobody was able to teach them. A third course was cancelled in mid-August despite having 9 students enrolled and being likely to have had several more enroll before classes began. In September, a CCE English course (Children's Literature) with 50 students enrolled in it was cancelled by CCE and it has so far proven impossible to staff a replacement course as all of the available, qualified sessional faculty are teaching the maximum number of credits allowed under the collective agreement.

Faculty and Staff Issues

1. Recommendations

- a. That as the pattern of resignations and retirements becomes clearer, the Department should consider and then prioritize the field of expertise needed in new hires.

FOLLOW-UP

- a. We can prioritize all we like, but the only firm commitments the university has made are to increasing the number of Aboriginal faculty and to replacement of faculty in accredited programs. In addition to a position in Indigenous Literatures of the Americas (to be shared with Modern Languages), we have one other position coming in Aboriginal Rhetorics and Literatures in Canada. Both of these positions fall under the Aboriginal hiring initiative.

Research Issues

1. Commendations
 - a. There are some strong researchers in the Department, and part of the credit for their success goes to the support received from the University itself.
2. Recommendations
 - a. Accommodations need to be made for junior faculty who wish to start up their research careers. Reducing committee responsibilities may be one way. More senior members should consider more actively mentoring such colleagues.

FOLLOW-UP

- a. With 6 full-time faculty members and little commitment to the hiring of new faculty members, this recommendation is a) impossible to follow through on b) moot because we no longer have junior faculty. They have departed to explore other opportunities, not because of problems in the department, but in part because of the university's inability to meet the needs of spouses with academic credentials. Sessional faculty do not have administrative responsibilities, which means that the day-to-day business of the department falls on the shoulders of a rapidly-shrinking group of faculty.

The Budget Committee

1. Recommendations
 - a) Replace two faculty members leaving the department in July 2011
 - b) Hire another tenured professor in Barrie

Rationale:

In Sudbury, as of July 2011, Dr. Shannon Hengen will be retiring and Dr. Bruce Dadey will be resigning. If they are not replaced, the Department will be without a Canadian specialist (Hengen) and the viability of the rhetoric and media stream will be imperiled (Dadey).

ACAPLAN believes however it would make sense to strengthen the existing stream by adding a tenure track position in Medieval and Renaissance literature in Barrie.

FOLLOW-UP:

- a. Not only have the two faculty members not been replaced, but we have lost three more, two to unpaid leaves of absence for 2012-13 and the other to retirement, bringing the total faculty loss from July 2011 to 4.4 members. Please remember that Dr. Tom Gerry's move to

Barrie also constituted a loss to the Sudbury campus when the LTA replacement for him was eliminated, which makes the total loss 5.4 of an original complement of 11.4. We are one of the smallest English departments in Canada and the smallest in relation to our student population. The two faculty members taking unpaid leave are doing so in part because of the needs of academic spouses, for whom other institutions are able to make inexpensive, yet meaningful, provision through unpaid research fellowships. One of the problems that Laurentian faces is that opportunities for academic spouses are very limited because there are not multiple institutions located within a 100 km radius.

b. This recommendation has not been followed. The most reasonable solution would be to move Dr. Sylvia Hunt from permanent sessional to tenure-stream. Indeed, Dr. Hunt is currently carrying part of the administrative load of the Barrie campus and engaging in research in a manner consistent with a tenure-stream position, but without remuneration. This situation is highly unjust.

Board and Faculty Association

1. Recommendation

a. In an effort to support the research activities of new tenure-track faculty, future negotiations between the two parties should include a discussion of whether the 6 credit reduction in teaching in the first two years should be extended to all incoming tenure-track faculty.

FOLLOW-UP

That no new hiring has occurred in the past three years has rendered this point moot.

2. Georgian Program

The Department

Student Issues

1. Commendations

- a. Students demonstrate an impressive level of energy and commitment.
- b. The Department in Sudbury has begun to offer workshops in Sudbury on such topics as applying to graduate school “live” to LU@Georgian students;

2. Recommendations

- a. That all first-year sections be visited at least once each academic year by a competent program adviser to explain program requirements and course offerings.

FOLLOW-UP

This has been done.

- b. Create a template with spaces provided for essential information to use, at least as a guideline, in the creation of syllabuses.

FOLLOW-UP

The department template has been circulated to faculty in Barrie.

- c. The Department could also consider inviting recent graduates of the program attending institutions such as York or the U. of T. to give advice on institutional expectations, preparing applications etc.

Program Issues

1. Commendations

- a. The course 1706/7 seems to be “working well.”
- b. Course numberings at Georgian are now standardized and are based on the Sudbury system.
- b. While there are some downsides, the splitting of full (6 credit) courses into half (necessitated by the scheduling software at Georgian) can be an advantage in that it allows students to earn half-course credits and fulfill group requirements by patching together half-courses in the right groups.

2. Recommendations

- a. That the ERMS stream not be introduced until the ELIT stream at Georgian is fully resourced by tenure-stream faculty.

FOLLOW-UP

Given the stated direction for the Barrie campus, with caps of 3 full-time faculty per unit, introducing the ERMS stream is unlikely to occur.

- b. Given that there is only one stream, ELIT, at Georgian, the Department should consider whether students should be introduced to rhetoric and media if there are few or no upper level courses in these fields.
- c. That a “point-person” be appointed to ensure consistency in the objectives, syllabuses, and evaluation methods of the first-year courses

FOLLOW-UP

There is a 1705 coordinator, but she is an employee of Georgian College, not of Laurentian.

- d. That a three-year plan for course offerings (subject to change) be created, and renewed yearly, and be made widely available to students, for example on the website. It should also be made available to the library, with recommendation of book titles that have priority.

FOLLOW-UP

The library budget for Barrie comes out of the budget for the department as a whole, which has experienced significant cuts. We are attempting to purchase more electronic books in order to make them more accessible to more students. Given the uncertainty of future relations between Laurentian and Georgian, it is not advisable to add physical books to the library in Barrie. Administrative decisions to cut courses and sections at the last minute have wrought havoc on attempts to plan and deliver a coherent program.

Faculty and Staff Issues

1. Commendations
 - a. The interactions of the teaching members in the LU@Georgian program are generous and fair-minded.
2. Recommendations
 - a. Since there is no designated administrative or secretarial support on site, the various administrative tasks which have to be performed should be clarified and assigned in a rational way and not merely on the basis of who is willing and available.

FOLLOW-UP

This has happened in a very partial way, but is not the responsibility of the department.

The Registrar's Office

1. Recommendations
 - a. That the two halves of a six credit course be scheduled on the same day and same time in the fall and winter semesters.

FOLLOW-UP

This is happening more consistently, but needs careful monitoring.

The Library

1. Commendations
 - a. Progress has been made on the creation of an adequate base collection for the courses thanks in part to a significant increase in the acquisitions budget.
 - b. the turn-around time for books requested through RACER has been reduced.
 - c. The creation of a committee to monitor library use has increased the level of trust and cooperation
2. Recommendations
 - a. The library needs to create more space for books as well as more quiet study space.

ENGL XXXX E0X:

<p style="text-align: center;">Contact Information</p> <p>Instructor:</p> <p>Office:</p> <p>Email:</p> <p>Telephone:</p> <p>Office Hours:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Course Description</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Texts</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Course Objectives</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Method of Evaluation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Course Outcomes</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Attendance</p> <p>Punctual and regular attendance at all academic exercises is expected from all students. After a lecture has begun, students may not be admitted to a classroom without the instructor's permission. The instructor must be notified of all extenuating circumstances that result in a student's absence. Absences in the excess of 20% of course time may jeopardize receipt of credit for the course. (Laurentian University Academic Regulations, p. 2)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Academic Dishonesty</p> <p>Laurentian University Policy on Academic Integrity: http://142.51.14.1/Laurentian/Home/Departments/Academic+Staff+Relations/PoliciesandProcedures/Politics+and+Proc+New.htm?Laurentian+Lang=en-CA</p>

Library

The following report provides details in the way the J.N. Desmarais Library responded to the recommendations proposed by the Academic Planning Committee regarding student, faculty, staff, and program issues.

Student Issues

Recommendation: The Library should consider modifying its use of the atrium to better serve students' desire that it be a more comfortable study space. Insufficient lighting and electrical outlets are issues.

Action: Lighting has been increased in the atrium. Furthermore, the atrium remains lighted 24 hours a day. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, the library was not able to increase the number of electrical outlets. It should also be noted that there is a level of uncertainty regarding lighting and the availability of electrical outlet due to the ongoing construction and installation of the new Starbucks in the rotunda.

Program Issues

Recommendation 1: To the extent that it is possible to do so within current budgetary constraints, the Library should continue to develop collections that anticipate student and faculty needs while still developing and implementing innovative service offerings that support faculty and student needs for research and learning.

Action: The library continues to aggressively develop its electronic resource collection, adding 12,000 new e-book titles over the course of the 2011/2012 academic year. Notable are the purchase of 8,000 Oxford Scholarship Online books (mainly in the social sciences and humanities) and the upcoming addition of 4,500 SpringerLink books (mainly in the sciences). Purchasing large e-book packages has proven to provide the best value as average cost per e-book ranges between \$5 and \$20 as opposed to the average cost of \$125 for title-by-title purchases.

The single service desk initiative progressed throughout the 2011/2012 academic year. It has been renamed to Access Services that combines basic reference, student cards, circulation, reserve and ILL.

Also underway is a trial with Ebsco to explore the feasibility of implementing a Discovery Layer that enable students and faculty to effectively and efficiently search through the library's electronic collection from a single point of access.

Recommendation 2: The Library should develop Collection Guidelines (including policies on such things as the balance of English and French acquisitions and the balance between acquisition of monographs and serials) that could inform both collections development and any cancellation exercises that might become necessary in the future.

Action: A Collection Development Policy has been drafted and will be presented to Faculty Councils as well as the Senate during fall 2012.

Recommendation 3: Once the implementation of Conifer is deemed complete, a report should be prepared to document that Conifer provides all the functionality required (acquisitions is currently lacking) and confirming the total costs of enhancing and maintaining Conifer.

Action: Like any other complex information system, Conifer is continually evolving to meet the needs of its users. New versions with additional features that enhance search, retrieval, and management of library materials have been deployed into production at Laurentian on a regular basis. An acquisition module has been available since January 2012, and work on incorporating it into the existing processes for acquisitions of library materials is underway.

Recommendation 4: The Library should work with University Computer Services to ensure regular downloads of student and faculty data to populate the ILS (this would improve service for students and faculty and save valuable library resources now required to input this information manually).

Action: The Library worked closely with IT Services to automate the creation of student and faculty accounts in the ILS based on campus data for the 2011/2012 academic year. The Library and IT Services continue to work together to improve the integration of campus systems to simplify access – for example, as of the 2012/2013 year, Library users will log onto their Library accounts using the same user name and password as their GroupWise and Novell accounts.

Recommendation 5: The Library should hold regular meetings with the libraries at NOSM, Laurentian and Lakehead.

Action: The University Librarians/Directors of Library has had three meetings to discuss relevant issues.

Recommendation 6: The Library should leverage its existing five-year plan and develop a strategic plan that is in sync with the University plan that should establish a mission, mandate and vision and be focused on outcomes.

Action: The library has drafted and adopted a 5-year strategic plan in line with that of the university.

Recommendation 7: The Library should hold regular meetings with the federated college libraries in order to continue to improve communication and to facilitate more consultation among the libraries.

Action: Starting in the 2012/2013 academic year, the University Librarian will meet twice a year with the federated college libraries' representatives.

Recommendation 8: The University should consider incentives to encourage researchers to submit their scholarly output to LU ZONE UL. For example, faculty 'champions' should be identified and recruited to actively encourage colleagues to support LU ZONE UL. Yet the University must also encourage the development of this program by fostering partnerships between the Library and other offices such as, for example, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

Action: The Native Social Work Journal is being published and made available on LU ZONE UL. The library is also in the midst of a pilot project to place post-graduate theses and dissertations on LU ZONE UL. The Office of Research and Graduate Studies is both apprized and supportive of this initiative.

Faculty and Staff Issues

Recommendation: The University Librarian should continue to develop the management team in the Library and look at ways that communication with the management and library team members could be improved.

Action: An Operations Groups meets every two weeks to discuss all inter-departmental issues facing the library. It is the forum in which librarians and supervisors inform each other on developments and directions their sections are taking.

Extra-Program Issues

Recommendation 1: The University should, in consultation with the Library, establish a percentage of the University budget to be dedicated to the Library and Archives Resources and Services. The 7% attained in the 1990s is unrealistic to maintain, but the current 4.2% is below national and provincial averages and should be increased to the provincial average for comparator institutions.

Action: This has not yet happened. Although there has been a minor increase to the acquisitions budget, it is woefully inadequate to develop and sustain the library's collection, both print and electronic. The maintenance of the electronic collection alone increases in cost by more than 5% per year.

Recommendation 2: To stem the estimated 43.75% drop in purchasing power over the past 5 years and to ensure this does not drop further, the University should establish annual indexation of the Library's collections budget at an agreed upon percentage. This budgeting process should take place in consultation with the University Librarian and the Senate Committee on Library and Archives.

Action: This has not yet happened. It should also be noted that the Senate Committee on Library and Archives no longer exists.

Recommendation 3: The University should work with the Library to find ways to maintain its service hours in support of excellence of student experience.

Action: The library has increased its opening hours during the fall and winter terms.

Recommendation 4: The space dedicated to the Archives should be protected from encroachment.

Action: The reading room in the Archives (Angus Gilbert Reading Room) has been successfully protected from encroachment. Students not only consult the various special collections and archives but also use it regularly to study and write since it is a silent space in the library. Unfortunately, it is different for the 'vault' where the archival fonds are kept.

The temperature and humidity controlled room is key in the preservation of the archival material. Having many files containing highly sensitive and personal information, the space is critical to keep the vault under controlled access. Currently the vault has stored: shelving units reserved for Barrie and the School of Architecture, tables, chairs, and documentation received from different governmental agencies. It appears that individuals, other than the Archivist, were given a key to access this sensitive and controlled area.

Recommendation 5: The University should protect the Library from further staff cuts. As current levels of staffing make it difficult for the Library to continue to offer essential services, as the University's financial situation improves, investments in additional staff for the Library should be a priority.

Action: This is of great concern to the library. Retiring personnel simply have not been replaced. It was also noted that the library does not seem to be included in the university's budget planning, with little evidence that any position will be created in the next few years. As it stands, current personnel complement is insufficient to fully develop an information literacy program; provide adequate liaison services to all departments on campus; particularly francophone and aboriginal programs; develop and sustain innovative web services, and sustain more than minimal archival services.

Recommendation 6: A fund should be developed to support replacement of librarians and archivists on sabbatical.

Action: As of yet, there exists no such fund.

Recommendation 7: Funds should be designated to support the development of print collections to support the Laurentian programs at Georgian College.

Action: No specific funds have been designated to support the development of print collections at Laurentian's Barrie campus. Rather, to answer Laurentian's multiple campuses, preference is given to the purchase of electronic resources which can be accessed regardless of geographic location. In addition, the library will be sending donated material and 2nd copies of books in those relevant subject areas rather than retain them at the Sudbury location.