

TO: Mike Mahon
President and Vice Chancellor

DATE: April 8, 2013

FROM: Robert A. Boudreau
Chair, University Review Committee

RE: Bachelor of Education, Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the University Review Committee approved the review of the Bachelor of Education at its December 18, 2012 meeting.

The Program Review Committee for this review was comprised of Robert Runte, Danny Balderson, Robin Bright, Nancy Grigg, and Edward Jurkowski. The review produced four documents:¹

1. *Self Study Report, University of Lethbridge, Faculty of Education, Undergraduate Program Quality Assurance Review Committee* (September 5, 2012) – self-study report developed by the Bachelor of Education Program Review Committee.
2. *External Reviewers' Report, University of Lethbridge, Faculty Of Education* (October 31, 2012) – prepared by external reviewers Andrew Kitchenham (UNBC) and Jacqueline Kirk (Brandon).
3. *Faculty of Education, Undergraduate Program, Quality Assurance Review: Response of the Self-Study Report Committee to the External Reviewer's Report* (November 16, 2012) – response of the Program Review Committee to the external review.
4. *Bachelor of Education Quality Assurance Review Dean's Response to the Self-Study and External Reviewers' Report* (December 13, 2012) – response to the review, written by Craig Loewen, Dean of Education.

Self Study

The main body of the Self Study Report addresses the seven criteria in the AQA Policy and Process. The discussion of how the B.Ed. satisfies each criterion identified the following issues:

1. How can the Faculty identify and seek consensus on the foundational aspects of our undergraduate program? Part of the answer is that the Faculty should reexamine its *15 Principles of Teacher Education*.
2. How can the Faculty grow and nurture its commitment to Aboriginal students and the needs of local FNMI community?
3. How can the Faculty be more effective and consistent in integrating FNMI/Blackfoot Nations content throughout the program?

¹ All documents are available upon request.

4. The Faculty should review the mandate of the Native Teacher Education Committee to ensure that it addresses current issues and challenges.
5. How can the Faculty of Education systematically and routinely gather feedback from Zone 6 superintendents, principals, and other key stakeholders on their perceptions of the quality of Faculty of Education graduates?
6. How can the Faculty remain current with the core concepts and vocabulary used in the schools?
7. The Faculty should examine processes and policy that govern the centralization and archiving of program evaluation data and minutes of all Faculty committee meetings.
8. Once protocols for reporting and archiving program evaluation data are established, the Faculty should investigate ways to achieve a self-sustaining model of improvement.
9. The Faculty should investigate ways to support and maintain its commitment to ongoing program review, experimentation, and development.
10. How could the Faculty of Education encourage small groups of faculty members to become involved in program evaluation and development?
11. The Faculty should seek ways to ensure the undergraduate program does not suffer financially, or through the decline in the direct involvement of tenure-track faculty, as the result of developing a strong graduate program.
12. The Faculty should undertake a review of the current admission and graduation routes to ensure it is meeting the workforce needs of Alberta schools (and other potential employment markets) and the needs of U of L graduates for teacher training.
13. Should the Faculty of Education revisit the principle that a particular minimum percentage of undergraduate classes must be taught by tenure-track faculty?
14. Should the Faculty ensure tenure-track faculty are present in any cohort/team that includes secondments, term, sessional, or other non-tenured faculty?
15. Should the Faculty recommit to the cohort model in the Professional Semesters? E.g., require regular communication between faculty members, and higher levels of integration within cohort groups and across subject areas.
16. Does the Faculty need to re-examine the practice of assigning one person to teach two seminar sections in different horizontal groups?
17. How could the principles and practices of the cohort model in the Professional Semester I be adopted in Professional Semester II?
18. How can the Faculty design and implement a review process for Professional Semester III?
19. How can the Faculty examine the criteria and processes for identifying which courses are “foundational”?
20. How can the Faculty help faculty members show the relationship between theory and practice in their teaching and supervision work?
21. How can Field Experiences examine placement practices to determine how faculty can be more involved in student placements?
22. How can the Faculty re-examine the “level of schooling” policy?

23. Should the Faculty restructure the criteria for students to be designated with “Distinction” and “Great Distinction”?
24. How can the Faculty ensure that its own technical support staff are retained, so they can provide necessary support to faculty and staff?

External Review

The focus of the External Reviewers’ site visit was on examining the strengths and weaknesses of the B.Ed. program. The reviewers met with over 50 people, including: Associate Dean of Arts and Science; Associate Dean of Fine Arts; Dean of Graduate Studies; Dean of Education; Associate Dean of Education; faculty and sessionals; undergraduate and graduate students; alumni; school district superintendents; school principals; and cooperating teachers.

Program Strengths:

- Graduates are well prepared to enter the teaching profession.
- Instructors are knowledgeable, experienced, and enthusiastic.
- The program uses Alberta Teacher Association standards to guide program delivery and student evaluation.
- Tenured and tenure-track faculty participate in at least one practicum experience with students. This is a unique feature.
- Education 2500, required for admission to Education, both orients students to the teaching profession and screens for admission to the program. This is a unique and effective feature.
- The Professional Growth Plan process helps prepare students for becoming teachers.
- There is excellent support for students who are having issues in their practicum placements.
- The program is strong in preparing students for a variety of educational environments in K-12.
- The teaching seminar helps students develop a support network.
- The Teacher Education Advisory Committee, comprised of representatives from the educational community, is very successful in nurturing communication between the Faculty and the educational community.
- PSIII, with its reduced teaching load, allows students to develop skills and knowledge by completing a required professional development project and showcase portfolio.
- Faculty teach at least one undergraduate course and one graduate course, which effectively bridges the Bachelors and Masters programs.

Program Issues:

- For the Education Partners Orientation Program, a representative of the various groups should attend, and not all of them as is current practice.
- There is a lack of preparation for students wanting to work in specialized environments like Early Childhood Education or Senior High School Mathematics.
- Student experiences in the teaching seminar vary, depending on who leads the seminar.

- PSIII, with half-time teaching for 12-15 weeks, may not prepare students for the reality of full-time teaching.
- The Faculty should consider ways of paying more attention to educational technology, FNMI education, assessment for learning, and Special Education.
- The use of educational technology is not consistent across courses.
- The infusion of FNMI education is at times cursory.
- Students need a stronger understanding of assessment strategies.
- The program should have better coverage of Special Education and ESL/EAL.

Recommendations:

- Use the teaching seminar to link theory with practice.
- Introduce a course that explains the importance of addressing the needs of FNMI students.
- Study other campuses as models for mutual partnership between a B.Ed. program and FNMI stakeholders.
- Infuse FNMI content throughout the curriculum, practicum, and communications.
- Use symbols, language, and art throughout buildings so they welcome FNMI people.
- Merge the two assessment courses.
- Set up a password-protected online database for Faculty minutes and related meeting decisions.
- Give cooperating teachers and administrators access to blogs, wikis, Twitter feeds, and Facebook posts from the Faculty of Education.
- Track if B.Ed. graduates go on to take Masters and Doctoral studies.
- Conduct online surveys of undergraduate students and exit surveys of graduating students.
- Create methods of formal collaboration between junior and senior faculty.
- Ensure courses and Professional Semesters are consistent.
- Develop a four-year B.Ed. program, perhaps a 2+2 model (two years in Arts and Science or Fine Arts and two years in Education).
- Introduce EAL/ESL courses or content.
- Make the Foundations course an elective.
- Revise the seminar courses so they are more useful to students as a place for discussing issues in education and for connecting the five PSI courses.
- For PSIII, change cooperating teacher expectations so they have to be in the classroom at least three times a week.
- Make more elective courses available during the Fall and Winter semesters so students can concentrate their electives into a specialization.

- Ensure students understand the importance of choosing a specialized focus for their electives.
- Discuss with Arts and Science and Fine Arts what courses they have that can better prepare Education students to teach secondary-level content.
- Prepare for succession planning, as faculty and administrators retire over the next five years.
- Model the assessment of learning in Education courses.
- Delete one of the Evaluation courses; one is sufficient.
- Change the qualitative ranking of PSIII students to Satisfactory vs. Unsatisfactory.
- Prepare the students to address the needs of 21st century learners.
- In Education courses, model and infuse the effective use of technology.
- Promote regular meetings with the Dean, Provost, and other administrators so faculty can voice concerns and communicate their roles in the University.
- Continue to hold regular meetings of all instructors to share information and avoid program duplications.
- Study how STP procedures may be adjusted to accommodate issues facing Education faculty, such as travel to practicum schools, service learning, applied research.

Program Response

In their Program Response, the Program Review Committee noted that, for follow up, the External Review Report's recommendations can be grouped under nine headings:

1. Faculty - Coursework.
2. Communication.
3. Assessment.
4. Professional Semester I.
5. Professional Semester II.
6. Professional Semester III.
7. Technology / 21st century learning.
8. FNMI education.
9. Administrative.

The Program Response suggested that the recommendations are a starting point for discussion and could be addressed at a faculty retreat, "Committee of the Whole" meetings, or other forums. A faculty-wide meeting should prioritize the recommendations. Some recommendations reflect a misunderstanding or incomplete understanding of the program. Other recommendations relate to controversial issues within the Faculty. And so all the recommendations must be discussed and vetted by the Faculty of Education.

Dean's Response

In his response, the Dean of Education grouped the following recommendations for program improvements around key themes.

Theme:	Recommendations:
Information Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Track the feedback received from the existing surveys of students and graduates.• Make the minutes from Education committees (like the Curriculum Committee, Executive Committee, the Faculty Council) more easily available.
Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strive to maintain the complement of tenure-track faculty in the undergraduate program.
Principles of Teacher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish an ad hoc task force of faculty and students to review the 15 Guiding Principles of Teacher Education to ensure they align with the Government of Alberta's Teaching Quality Standard. The task force's recommendations for changes to the principles will be brought to the Faculty Retreat in Spring 2014.
FNMI Teacher Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Native Teacher Education Committee will address five main issues: (1) evaluate the viability of the Native Studies major in the B.Ed. program; (2) examine the possibility of an additional FNMI program component for all B.Ed. students; (3) annually hire a teacher seconded from a reserve school; (4) study ways to infuse FNMI content across the program; and (5) consider regularizing the Niitsitapi teacher education program.
Professional Semester III	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarify the roles and responsibilities of participants in the Professional Semester III.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider increasing the amount of time in the B.Ed. program devoted to assessment.
Technology and the 21 st Century Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Communications Technology in Teaching and Learning committee will consider the self study's recommendation to use Faculty of Education technology staff to support faculty initiatives.
Bachelor of Education (4 year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate the possibility of offering a four-year B.Ed. using a 2+2 program model.
Succession and Program Renewal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to plan for the potential retirement of about one-third of the current faculty within five years. This includes offering opportunities for faculty to gain leadership and administrative experience.

The Dean of Education emphasized that Education uses a shared governance model, which will be used to implement the recommendations. There will be five key committees involved in implementation:

1. CTITL - Communications Technology in Teaching and Learning.
2. Undergrad Prog Development Committee.
3. PSIII Standing Committee.
4. Native Teacher Education Committee.
5. "Committee of the Whole" monthly meetings. This committee will discuss quality assurance recommendations and will likely create subcommittees to tackle them.

The University Review Committee is satisfied that the Bachelor of Education academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Boudreau". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Boudreau" clearly distinguishable.

Robert A. Boudreau
Chair, University Review Committee

Cc: Andrew Hakin, Provost and Vice President (Academic)