

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED:

Recommendation
Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

DATE: 23 January 2024

FROM: Undergraduate Studies Committee

SUBJECT: Cyclical Program Review 18-month Follow-up Report – Bachelor of Allied Health Science

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

In accordance with Article 8 of the Ontario Tech University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures, eighteen months following the completion of a program review the Dean will prepare a brief follow up report and “A summary of the progress report will be approved by the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council”. This summary report will be reported to Academic Council for information and subsequently posted to the Ontario Tech corporate website.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

Eighteen months after the completion of a program review the Faculty is asked to report on the progress to date in implementing the agreed upon plans for improvement. The report is sent to the Academic Resource Committee for review and further follow-up, if required.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

The Faculty’s plans to address any remaining resource needs are outlined in the 18-Month report. Information and support will be required from various areas of the University in order to implement the plan as originally agreed.

COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY/LEGISLATION:

The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council), established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, is responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework processes for Ontario Universities. The Council operates at arm’s length from both Ontario’s publicly assisted universities and Ontario’s government. Under the Quality Assurance Framework, academic programs must undergo a cyclical review at least every eight years following their implementation. The purpose of the cyclical program review is to critically examine the components of a program with the assistance of outside reviewers with the goal of continuous improvement. A program review’s purpose is not solely

to demonstrate the positive aspects of the program, but also to outline opportunities that will lead to improvements for the future.

NEXT STEPS:

Following presentation to Academic Council, this summary will be posted to the University's website.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

18-Month Report Summary



**18-Month Follow-Up
SUMMARY REPORT
November 6, 2023**

Bachelor of Allied Health Science

Dean: Dr. Carol Rodgers

Under Ontario Tech University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and the Ontario Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), all programs are subject to a comprehensive review at least/at minimum every eight years to ensure that they continue to meet provincial quality assurance requirements and to support their ongoing rigour and coherence. Program reviews involve several stages, including:

1. A comprehensive and analytical self-study brief developed by members of the program under review.
2. A site visit by academic experts who are external to and arm's length from the program. The visit involves discussions with senior academic administrators, faculty, staff, and students.
3. Submission of an external reviewers' report including recommendations on ways the program may be improved based on a review of the program's self-study brief, discussions during the site visit and supporting material.
4. Internal responses to the external review and recommendations prepared separately by the Program and Dean.
5. Development of an Implementation Plan prepared by the Dean including resource requirements and a timeline for acting on and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

All programs that undergo a review must provide a report eighteen months after the completion of the review to gather information on the progress that has been made implementing the agreed upon plans for improvement.

In 2019-2021 a review was scheduled for the Bachelor of Allied Health Science with a site visit on October 19, 21-22, 2021. The program has submitted to the Provost’s Office a report outlining the progress they have made relative to the implementation plan resulting from the review. A summary of this progress is provided on the following pages.

Implementation Plan Action Item(s) <i>(corresponding recommendation # from reviewers’ report)</i>		Timeline	Status*	Comments from Dean on progress of implementation
Recommendation 1: Increase availability of and/or plan regular availability for optional courses perhaps on a rotational basis.	a. Review the existing electives.	In progress with FHSc Curriculum Committee.	<i>Complete</i>	<p><i>Starting Fall 2021 a retrospective review process mapped the elective courses offered by the Faculty of Health Sciences. It identified (a) program-specific electives, offered as optional to students within a program, and (b) open electives, defined by Ontario Tech University as “any course for which a student has the required prerequisite(s), is not precluded from taking by program restriction and fits in her/his course schedule”. These included courses with codes for Health Sciences (HLSC), Kinesiology (KINE) and Indigenous Studies (INDG) students, offered in Fall (40%) and Winter (60%) semesters, most of them as online courses. More specifically, 35 HLSC elective courses were identified, most of them offered at the 4000 level (24 out of 35) and online (22 out of 35). Between 2019 and 2021, a total of over 500 BAHSc students registered to any of these courses.</i></p> <p><i>Following this mapping exercise, a plan was established to: (a) keep and offer well attended courses, (b) identify</i></p>
	b. Courses that have not been offered over the past 5 years will be assessed to determine whether they should be delisted.	Complete and recommend listing and plan to Faculty Council for implementation in Fall, 2023/24 or 2024/25 academic year.	<i>Complete</i>	
	c. Once an “updated” listing of elective courses is created will develop a 3-4 year rolling plan for elective course offers.		<i>Complete</i>	

				<p><i>subject gaps for new courses that could be created or older courses that could be redesigned, and (c) plan annual or bi-annual elective course offerings. The latter was useful as some elective courses had been approved but not recently taught and thus declared “moribund courses” by the Office of the Registrar, as they had not been taught in the last 3 years. Consequent to this plan, an annual review and proposal of elective courses is carried out at the Faculty of Health Sciences. The current 23/24 annual elective courses plan includes Fall & Winter offerings and a proposed plan for future 24/25 and 25/26 electives.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>Increase flexibility for students to take courses from other faculties (e.g. Education or Social Sciences) and on-campus courses.</p>	<p>a. Review current program required offerings to ensure “required” components should still be retained as required courses.</p> <p>b. identification/ review of optional courses for students to consider.</p>	<p>Begin Spring 2022 by the BAHS program committee.</p> <p>If program changes are required, bring to FHSc Curriculum Committee and Faculty Council by Fall 2022, for Implementation in Fall 2023.</p>	<p><i>Complete</i></p>	<p>Comments from Dean on progress of implementation:</p> <p><i>The mapping of the existing core courses to the program level learning outcomes was completed. BAHSc program committee members reviewed and discussed the results. There was consensus to retain existing required courses.</i></p> <p><i>The results of from the Exit Graduate survey in year 2022 and 2023 (N=16) indicated that respondents strongly agreed/agreed that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. The program curriculum prepares you well for a position in your chosen profession.</i> <i>b. The curriculum fostered integration across health sciences concepts/topics</i> <i>c. The curriculum fostered application across health sciences concepts/topics</i> <i>d. The core curriculum provided you with a solid foundation in relevant health services competencies.</i>

				<p>However, approximately 50% of the respondents disagreed that:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The selection of elective courses met your needs.</i></p> <p><i>The review of the electives completed to address Recommendation # 1 will increase the number and availability of electives available to BAHSc students.</i></p> <p><i>No program changes were required.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Consider limitations to ability to grow the program for international students.</p>	<p>Focus on domestic Student recruitment until limitations in program delivery and content are addressed.</p>	<p>For the purpose of this review, this item is complete. The limitations/ requirements for more targeted international recruitment have been identified, and at this time the focus will continue to be on increasing domestic enrolment. Should requirements change, this item will be revisited.</p>	<p><i>Complete</i></p>	<p>Comments from Dean on progress of implementation:</p> <p><i>We have given further consideration to this recommendation, but our focus will continue to be on domestic students including those students who have been international trained and are working /or have worked in Canada.</i></p>
<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>Better tracking of graduates and their careers.</p>	<p>a. Develop exit survey for graduates.</p>	<p>Completed April 2022</p>	<p><i>Complete</i></p>	<p>Comments from Dean on progress of implementation:</p> <p><i>BAHSc Program Director developed the first draft of the questionnaire. Program committee members provided feedback and changes were made in response to the feedback. The questionnaire was then piloted with a group of target users. Further refinement of the</i></p>

				<i>questionnaire was completed based on the feedback from the pilot test results.</i>
	b. Formalize process for distribution.	Completed June 2022	<i>Complete</i>	Comments from Dean on progress of implementation: <i>The initial virtual distribution of the questionnaire occurred June 2022. The questionnaire will be distributed to new graduates on a yearly basis.</i>
Recommendation 5: Consider hiring or appointing a program director and/or additional administrative staff to handle administrative and coordinating duties and to raise the program profile.	Interview/select a program director.	This activity was completed February 1, 2022.	<i>Complete</i>	Comments from Dean on progress of implementation: <i>Expression of interest was posted by the Dean, November 2021. A selection committee was formed (as per the collective agreement) to review the submitted expression of interest, subsequently interviews were held, and offer made and accepted.</i>
Recommendation 7: Enhance and modernize program marketing efforts and materials.	Budget request has been submitted to hire communications/marketing expertise.	Pending budget availability.	<i>On hold and Continuous</i>	Comments from Dean on progress of implementation: On Hold <i>Funding request was not approved</i> <i>Program Director explored cost to purchase advertising in key professional association[s] publications. This option had substantial cost associated with it which the program has no funding to support. It was also noted that while this program is fully online and can be delivered virtually across the country, little or no marketing is conducted outside Ontario, additional funding would support this initiative.</i>

	<p>In the interim, or if request is denied explore using FBIT/FSSH students in marketing and communications through capstone project(s) to support initiatives.</p>	<p>Schedule meetings with FBIT/FSSH Deans to discuss capstone option. Fall 2022.</p>	<p><i>In Progress</i></p>	<p><i>Capstone options – discussions with FSSH have been initiated – contact name etc. Need to develop proposal.</i></p> <p>Continuous</p> <p><i>Due to the lack of funding a review of other potential opportunities resulted in the identification of the following activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) engagement of current students to speak at recruitment events,</i> <i>b) advertisement of program at conferences which are attended by target population, i.e., LABCON (medical laboratory workers), the program continues to pursue additional opportunities.</i> <i>c) 2023 program postcard and view book have been updated and includes a QR code linked to program website,</i> <i>d) in collaboration with the program advisory committee (established in 2023) and the program committee the following activities are currently underway to develop and implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a. a strategy to reach out to employers to recruit in the workplace,</i> <i>b. PowToon’s (length, 2-3 minute video) to advertise the program alongside other marketing materials.</i> </i> <p><i>These are in conjunction with additional social media marketing being undertaken more broadly by FHSc.</i></p>
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Recommendation 8: Conduct systematic study to identify reasons for low student retention rates.	a. Review retention rates over the last 5 years.	Initiate Fall 2022 with the intent to have an informed process of identifying at-risk students in place by December 2023.	<i>In progress</i>	Comments from Dean on progress of implementation <i>Based on the numbers provided, a review of retention rates over the last 5 years (2015-2020) reveals that retention has ranged from 53-65%.</i> Activities that are ongoing: a) <i>The exploration of the feasibility of collecting additional variables (e.g., professional designation, professional program, regulated health profession) upon registration. This would provide an opportunity to a better understand who the students are, who stays. and who leaves.</i>
	b. Create profile of students who leave and when.	form an online community for students enrolled in the program. Student/Alumni lead?	<i>In progress</i>	Comments from Dean on progress of implementation Planning and action at the faculty level: a) <i>Develop and implement a short virtual questionnaire to be administered to all students enrolled in the program annually. The purpose of the questionnaire is to determine how students are doing if they need support and what kind of support.</i> i. <i>Present idea to program advisory committee for advice on what to include in the questionnaire, and</i> ii. <i>Identify faculty member to lead the development and implementation of the virtual questionnaire.</i> b) <i>Develop and implement an online community for students enrolled in the program.</i>
	c. Identification of at-risk students – ensure appropriate support options.			<i>In progress</i>

<p>Recommendation 9:</p> <p>Implement improvements to enhance student engagement and peer learning in the online delivery model.</p>	<p>Undertake a review of current assessment practices across required courses to determine whether there is opportunity for more reflective learning integrating “work” experiential learning.</p>	<p>Begin this activity in Winter 2023 term.</p>	<p><i>In Progress</i></p>	<p>Comments from Dean on progress of implementation</p> <p><i>One of the priority objectives of the FHSc over the next 18 months is to re-Imagine learning (i.e., Experiential) through modernization and Innovation. Simulation learning is a form of experiential learning. One of the actions to achieve this goal is to define and assess how we currently use low fidelity through high fidelity simulation in health sciences. This activity is currently underway within the faculty. For example, a number of BAHSc core courses have integrated experiential learning into the learning experience (e.g., Critical Perspectives on Health and Illness, Public Health 1, Research Practicum, and Ethics).</i></p> <p><i>It should be noted that the majority of the BAHSc students are health care workers who are currently working in their discipline. These students bring real life work experiences into the classroom that enrich the learning the learning experience (theory to practice).</i></p>
	<p>Provide PD support in the area of “student engagement in an on-line environment” for faculty who are interested.</p>	<p>Offer PD series to support interested in Fall 2024.</p>	<p><i>In Progress</i></p>	<p>Comments from Dean on progress of implementation</p> <p><i>Scheduled for Fall 2024</i></p>

***Process Status Legend:**

Complete: Accomplished action item; no further steps required.

Continuous: Initial action item complete but requires ongoing monitoring and/or enhancement.

In Progress: Progress on the action item has been initiated but is not complete at this time. Outline all steps taken in the comment's column.

On Hold: Unable to complete due to other dependent factor(s).

Cancelled: Item no longer relevant or resources unavailable.

This summary report will be sent for approval to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC), and will subsequently be reported to Academic Council. It will then be posted on the Ontario Tech corporate website.

Next Scheduled Program Review: 2027-2029