



University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

Programs Reviewed:	Environmental Studies, BA (Hons): Major, Minor Environmental Ethics, BA (Hons): Major, Minor Environment & Health, BSc (Hons): Specialist, Major Environment & Energy: Minor Environmental Science, BSc (Hons): Major, Minor Environment & Toxicology, BSc (Hons): Specialist Environment & Behaviour: Minor
Unit Reviewed:	School of the Environment
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	1. Professor John Pierce, Ph.D., Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University 2. Professor Stephen Murphy, Ph.D., School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability (SERS), University of Waterloo
Date of review visit:	January 28, 2018
Date reported to AP&P:	November 1, 2018

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

1 Outcome

- The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.

2 Significant Program Strengths

- Excellent undergraduate curriculum that is on par with expectations for the field
- Unique experiential learning opportunities and research experience for undergraduates
- High overall morale, and strong commitment and attachment to the School

- High praise for the Director who has brought the unit together
- Ample goodwill and cooperation between the School and cognate units
- Groundswell of sustainability and enhanced environment-focused research and teaching that position University and the Faculty of Arts & Science as leaders

3 Opportunities for Program Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Articulating how the priorities of the School of the Environment relate to the academic plans and priorities of the Faculty of Arts & Science and the University
- Exploring changing to the School's EDU:B status, which might enhance collegiality, shared purpose, access to resources and graduate programs, and would require a dedicated faculty complement
- Exploring initiatives to expand community at the School, including looking for a dedicated space
- Exploring collaborative opportunities with cognate units including the Centre for Indigenous Studies and the Department of Anthropology
- Improving communications regarding program admissions, the availability of experiential learning opportunities, and future professional and career options.
- Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to ensure regular discussion of the curriculum and experiential learning, including input from students
- Making revisions to course offerings such as adding more quantitative methods content, and reviewing potential overlap in second year courses
- Increasing interactions between students and faculty
- Enhancing the educational experience by improving interactions between undergraduate and graduate students



4 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

3

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

October 2, 2018

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost Academic Programs
University of Toronto

Re: UTQAP cyclical review of the School of the Environment

Dear Professor McCahan,

Along with the faculty, staff and students of the School of the Environment, I am pleased with the external reviewers' assessment of the School of the Environment and its programs Environmental Studies, B.A., Hons., (Major, Minor); Environmental Ethics, B.A., Hons., (Major, Minor); Environment & Health, B.Sc., Hons., (Specialist, Major); Environment & Energy (Science) Minor; Environmental Science, B.Sc., Hons., (Major, Minor); Environment & Toxicology, B.Sc., Hons., (Specialist); and Environment & Behaviour (Science) Minor. The reviewers complimented the undergraduate programs on being in "*excellent condition*" and noted that "*success is evident on a number of fronts*" in the School of the Environment

The quality of this program notwithstanding, as per your letter dated July 20, 2018, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. I am writing to address the areas of the review report that you identify as key. The response to these items and implementation plan are separated into immediate (6 months), medium (one to two years), and longer (three to five years) terms, where appropriate, along with who (Program Coordinator, Department, Dean) will take the lead in each area. The School of the Environment has discussed the reviewers' comments through consultation with various groups and has begun to implement changes where appropriate and that are consistent with the School of the Environment's mission.

Strategic Planning

The reviewers recommended articulating how the priorities of the School of the Environment relate to the academic plans and priorities of the Faculty of Arts & Science and the University.

Immediate-term response: The Director will work with the Dean's office to examine opportunities for the School to align with and deliver Faculty priorities. In 2017-18, Arts and Science developed a document that articulates Faculty Strategic and Operational priorities. Specifically, the Faculty will: capitalize on our strengths as a Faculty of Arts and Science; improve the student experience, inside and outside the classroom; push the boundaries of our research success; promote diversity and accessibility; and build new partnerships with our communities. In addition, we will focus on a key operational priority: building the capital and infrastructure needed to pursue our strategic goals.

The School of the Environment is well-placed to play a role in the delivery of two of these strategic priorities in particular. First, as a multi-disciplinary centre with programs that cross sectors, the School is well-situated to capitalize on A&S's strengths as Faculty of Arts *and* Science. Indeed, the school offers undergraduate programs leading to both BA and BSc degrees, and includes joint faculty appointments across sectors. The School is also in the process of proposing a Masters of Environment and Sustainability (MES) graduate degree that would have the potential to bring together students with Science, Humanities, and Social Science backgrounds. The Faculty will work with the new program Director to identify further areas in which students and researchers may benefit from the School's multidisciplinary approach to Environmental Science and Environmental Studies.

The School is also well-aligned with the Faculty priority to enhance community partnerships. For example, the Acting Director is planning a faculty retreat for members of the School, with a particular focus on strengthening trans-disciplinary research within the School, enhancing the visibility of the School in national and international issues on the environment, and identifying international partners for strategic collaborative links. The School will work to increase engagement with local and national environmental issues, and engaging with international partners for collaboration in both education and research. The School currently holds 9 joint-appointed faculty with other Departments or EDU-As, making it an excellent hub for collaborations.

In addition to considering alignments with Faculty priorities, the Director also will review the University's ISRP (Institutional Strategic Research Plan) and the President's Three Priorities (leveraging our urban location, international partnerships, and reimagining undergraduate education) to identify areas of strength and potential areas for development within the School.

Medium-term response: The Director will continue to work with the President's Advisory Committee on the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability with regard to articulating the School's role in the evolving sustainability strategy of the university

The reviewers suggested that changes to the School's EDU:B status might enhance collegiality, shared purpose, access to resources, graduate programs, and complement; they advised that it is time for a discussion of the School's EDU status.

Immediate-term response: The Dean will commence a consultation process in which members of the school and cognate units will be involved in a discussion of structural changes that may be beneficial to the School, including the possibility of a transition from EDU-B to EDU-A status. We note that the issue of when a change in status from C to B or B to A may be appropriate for an EDU is a larger question for the Faculty. The Faculty will strike a Working Group in 2018-19 to develop clear policies and guidelines for internal academic changes in centres and programs that fall outside Departments. Consultations regarding a change to the School of Environment's status will take place in the context of this larger process.

Medium-term response: The Faculty will implement structural changes to the School that are deemed appropriate following consultation, as noted above.

Faculty Resources

The reviewers highlighted that if the School changes to an EDU:A, a dedicated faculty complement would be an important step to strengthening the depth of research and teaching at the School.

There are currently 10 faculty with appointments to the school. Eight joint faculty lines have been allocated over the past 5 years. Although joint appointments encourage the development of partnerships within the Faculty, they can also pose challenges with respect to teaching assignments and other administrative issues. If the School becomes an EDU:A in the future, it will be eligible to hold primary administrative appointments.

In the Faculty of Arts and Science, units submit requests for new faculty positions through a formal process to the Faculty Appointments Committee. Units submit requests in March of each year for consideration by the Faculty Appointments Committee, which includes faculty representatives from across the three FAS sectors (the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences) as well as the Colleges. After considering the full range of requests, the FAC makes recommendations to the Dean. Any request for additional faculty has an impact across the division, and as such, faculty appointments are considered not in isolation, but with respect to needs that exist across the Faculty.

Medium-term response: The School's Program Director will undertake a complement planning exercise to identify areas for jointly appointed hires. Should the School transition to EDU-A status, the School will be eligible to submit requests for faculty lines through the Faculty Appointments Committee.

The School will work with the Dean's office to strengthen research and teaching at the school.

Administration

The reviewers recommended exploring initiatives to expand community at the School. Further, they added that a dedicated space for the School would help build collegiality.

Immediate-term response: The Dean will review options to improve the school's space. Options under discussion include a dedicated building, consolidation in a contiguous space, and improvements to the current two spaces in the Earth Sciences Centre. The feasibility, timeline, and external implications for each option will be evaluated. The Director will review the current space needs in the light of recent faculty hires and the proposed graduate program, and develop a plan to implement the reviewer's recommendations for greater interaction between faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students.

Medium-term response: With support from the Dean's Office, the School will decide on which space option to pursue and develop a plan and timeline.

The Director will continue to explore initiatives aimed at expanding community, including the possibility of joint faculty positions, and the development of connections with existing programs (including the new Trinity One program on environment and sustainability). The Director will also continue to improve the organization and management of the School's ongoing Environment

Seminar series, the Environment and Health seminar series, the three annual Memorial lectures, and the annual Willis & White Thought Leadership event.

The reviewers suggested exploring collaborative opportunities with cognate units including the Centre for Indigenous Studies and the Department of Anthropology.

Immediate-term response: The School will continue ongoing consultations with units such as the Centre for Indigenous Studies and the Department of Anthropology to explore further research and teaching collaborations. The Director will continue to reach out to other cognate units for opportunities for cross-appointments as well as research and teaching collaborations.

The reviewers highlighted the need for improvements to communications regarding program admissions, the availability of experiential learning opportunities, and future professional and career options.

Immediate-term response: The School will continue with the redesign of the current website to improve communication with students. For example, a section for prospective students has been added and needs to be populated with content, and an alumni profiles section is in preparation.

The Director will work with the School's recently hired Communications Officer and the Communications and Outreach Committee to develop and implement a communications strategy including a stronger social media presence; further development of audience-driven web-based content; opportunities to promote the Living Lab approach as a key innovation in the School; and improvements in highlighting the expertise and level of the people available for professional experience opportunities.

Medium-term response: The School will implement this new communications strategy. The Director will lead a review of the new website and communication strategy, seeking input from students to identify gaps and opportunities for further improvements.

The reviewers recommended ensuring that mechanisms are in place to ensure regular discussion of the curriculum and experiential learning, including input from students.

Immediate-term response: The School will build upon a recent decision to separate the role of the Academic Associate Director into two positions: Undergraduate Associate Director and Graduate Associate Director (pending approval of a new graduate program), by implementing separate Undergraduate and Graduate Affairs Committees to allow fuller and richer discussions of relevant issues.

The School will work to improve student representation on both of these committees, and to improve opportunities for students' voices to be heard.

Medium-term response: The School will work with the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate and International, to identify opportunities for SoE students within the Faculty. In addition, the Director will work with the Curriculum Innovation subcommittee of the President's Advisory Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability, with regard to their goals for increasing community-engaged learning courses and activities on sustainability topics.

Curriculum

The reviewers suggested some revisions to course offerings such as adding more quantitative methods content, and reviewing potential overlap in second year courses.

Immediate-term response: The Director will commence discussions with the Vice-Dean, Undergraduate and International, to discuss curriculum issues raised during the course of the cyclical review.

Medium-term response: The Director will oversee a curriculum mapping exercise, guided by the School's priorities. The Director will implement the recommendations that flow out of the mapping exercise.

The reviewers suggested that increased interactions between students and faculty may be achieved by changes to course delivery; they also suggested enhancing the educational experience by improving interactions between undergraduate and graduate students.

Immediate-term response: The Director will identify and develop activities that enhance interactions within the School's communities, including staff, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students and various student groups.

Medium-term response: The Director will review the use of cross-listed courses between undergraduate and graduate levels, including: ENV461/ENV1103 "The U of T Campus as a Living Lab of Sustainability;" and ENV422/ENV1701 "Environmental Law." These courses are currently offered through a graduate collaborative specialization. The School will consider other opportunities for cross-listed courses. The reviewers noted that some students may not have been aware of the "U of T Campus as a Living Lab of Sustainability" course; the Director will work to ensure that students are aware of the variety of course options available to them through the School.

Longer-term response: As noted above, the School is proposing an MES program; this program will have the potential to increase opportunities for graduate students to engage in mentorships, career opportunities and TAing for key ENV courses.

To conclude, we appreciate that the external reviewers identified the School of the Environment's strengths and noted a few areas for development. The School of the Environment has already begun to move forward with plans to address the recommendations as presented by the reviewers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Cameron".

David Cameron, CM, FRSC
Dean and Professor of Political Science

cc.

John Robinson, Acting Director, School of the Environment

Poppy Lockwood, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Strategic Initiatives, Faculty of Arts & Science

Daniella Mallinck, Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Andrea Benoit, Academic Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as the excellent undergraduate curriculum that is on par with expectations for the field; unique experiential learning opportunities and research experience for undergraduates; high overall morale and strong commitment and attachment to the School; the Director, who has brought the unit together; ample goodwill and cooperation between the School and cognate units; and the groundswell of sustainability and enhanced environment-focused research and teaching that position University and the Faculty of Arts & Science as leaders. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: articulating how the priorities of the School of the Environment relate to the academic plans and priorities of the Faculty of Arts & Science and the University; exploring changing the School's EDU:B status; exploring initiatives to expand community at the School, including looking for a dedicated space; exploring collaborative opportunities with cognate units including the Centre for Indigenous Studies and the Department of Anthropology; improving communications regarding program admissions, the availability of experiential learning opportunities, and future professional and career options; ensuring that mechanisms are in place to ensure regular discussion of the curriculum and experiential learning, including input from students; making revisions to course offerings such as adding more quantitative methods content, and reviewing potential overlap in second year courses; increasing interactions between students and faculty; and enhancing the educational experience by improving interactions between undergraduate and graduate students. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty, unit and programs' responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.