

Queen's University
Executive Summary of the Review of the
Academic Programs in the Department of Geography and Planning

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), the department of geography and the school of urban and regional planning submitted separate self-studies to the faculty of arts and science, school of graduate studies and the office of the provost and vice-principal (academic) to initiate the cyclical program reviews of their undergraduate and graduate programs [BA, BAH, BSc, BScH, MA, MSc, MPL, PhD]. Because the two units have subsequently joined into a the newly structured department of geography and planning and all academic courses now reside in the new department, a single response to the reports has been created.

Self-study submission date for department of geography: May 22, 2015

Self-study submission date for school of urban and regional planning: August 30, 2015

The approved self-studies included:

- program descriptions
- learning outcomes
- library reports
- analyses of data
- CVs for core faculty

Site visit dates department of geography and planning: November 5 & 6, 2015

Site visit dates school of urban and regional planning: November 2 & 3, 2015

Review team members for the department of geography and planning:

- Dr. Brian Moorman, Department of Geography, University of Calgary
- Dr. Philip Kelly, Department of Geography, York University
- Dr. Jean Hutchinson, Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering

Review team members for the school of urban and regional planning

- Dr. David Brown, School of Urban Planning, McGill University
- Dr. Thomas Hutton, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia
- Dr. Rosemary Lysaght, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Queen's

Meetings included:

- vice-provost (teaching and learning)
- vice-provost and dean and associate dean school of graduate studies
- dean, vice-dean and associate dean of arts and science
- cognate heads
- librarian

- undergraduate and graduate students
- staff
- faculty
- a tour of teaching and research facilities

In their reports the review teams provided feedback that describes how the department of geography and planning meets the QUQAP evaluation criteria and is consistent with the university's mission and academic priorities. The review teams noted:

- that the faculty and programs in geography are among the best in Canada.
- that the planning program (MPL) is a "first rate" professional graduate program.

The reviewers also noted the following concerns:

- decreased student enrolment in undergraduate courses;
- extended times to completion for PhD students; and
- increasing competition for students in planning programs.

Based on all of the above documentation, a *Final Assessment Report* and *Implementation Plan* were prepared by the vice-provost (teaching and learning) and approved by the provost on August 3, 2016.

The academic programs in the department of geography and planning have been approved to continue and are scheduled for their next review in eight years (2023-2024).

Prepared by the vice-provost (teaching and learning)

July 29, 2016

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan for the Cyclical Program Review of the Academic Programs in the Department of Geography and Planning

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate and graduate academic programs in the department of geography and planning [BA, BAH, BSc, BScH, MA, MSc, MPL, PhD]. This report identifies:

- the significant strengths of the program;
- opportunities for program improvement and enhancement; and
- 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 entailed 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 Academic Programs in the Department of Geography and Planning

It should be noted that two self-studies were completed as separate documents for the seven year period prior to the union of the department of geography and the school of urban and regional planning into the department of geography and planning. Since all academic courses now reside in the newly structured department of geography and planning, a single response to the reports has been prepared.

Self-study submission date for the department of geography: May 22, 2015

Self-study submission date for the school of urban and regional planning: August 30, 2015

The approved self-studies included:

- program descriptions
- learning outcomes
- library reports
- analyses of data
- CVs for core faculty

Review team members for the department of geography and planning:

- Dr. Brian Moorman, Department of Geography, University of Calgary
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan for the CPR of the academic programs in the department of geography and planning

- Dr. Philip Kelly, Department of Geography, York University
- Dr. Jean Hutchinson, Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering

Review team members for the school of urban and regional planning

- Dr. David Brown, School of Urban Planning, McGill University
- Dr. Thomas Hutton, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia
- Dr. Rosemary Lysaght, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Queen's

Meetings included:

- vice-provost (teaching and learning)
- vice-provost and dean and associate dean school of graduate studies
- dean, vice-dean and associate dean of arts and science
- cognate heads
- librarians
- undergraduate and graduate students
- staff
- faculty
- a tour of teaching and research facilities

The review team evaluated the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to Queen's on:

November 5 & 6, 2015 (department of geography and planning)

November 2 & 3, 2015 (school of urban and regional planning)

In their reports (November 26, 2015 for SURP and December 4, 2015 for geography), the review teams provided feedback that describes how the department of geography and planning meets the QUQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the university's mission and academic priorities. The review teams noted:

- that the faculty and programs in geography are among the best in Canada.
- that the planning program (MPL) is a "first rate" professional graduate program.

The reviewers also noted the following concerns:

- decreased student enrolment in undergraduate courses;
- extended times to completion for PhD students; and
- increasing competition for students in planning programs.

Responses were received from:

- the head of the department of geography and planning (January 4, 2016)
- the associate dean of arts and science (February 17, 2016)
- the vice-provost and dean, school of graduate studies (January 25, 2016)

Subsequent to receipt of the review team report and the internal responses from the department, faculty and dean of graduate studies, the senate cyclical program review committee (SCPRC) dedicated its meeting of March 8, 2016 to this particular discussion.

The SCPRC would like to recognize the following strengths of the department of geography and planning:

- excellent faculty who are highly accomplished, productive scholars;
- excellent graduate education, spanning from the professional Master of Urban and Regional Planning to Master of Arts, Master of Science and PhD-level programs, that support very good graduate outcomes (completion and employment);
- offering a variety of significant experiential learning opportunities in programs in geography and in planning, providing its students with an enriched learning environment;
- Strong alignment with the university's equity and accessibility goals.

The SCPRC identified the following opportunities for enhancement. The department is encouraged to continue to explore:

- synergies in the newly formed unit which present multiple opportunities for program expansion, research-intensity and development;
- opportunities to establish expanded credentials by seeking out collaborations and partnerships both internal and external to the unit;
- new innovative programs including the: 4 + 1 geography degree with the Master of Urban and Regional Planning;
- reducing graduate times-to-completion;
- leveraging the success of the certificate in geographic information systems (GIS);
- opportunities to broaden and explore offerings by including courses from cognate units in both undergraduate and graduate programs;
- opportunities to recruit undergraduate students into the department at an earlier stage by revisiting the first-year program and/or creating new pathways.

Summary of the Reviewers' Comments/Recommendations with the Internal Responses

Graduate Times to Completion

The reviewers of the MA, MSc and PhD programs recommended that the student funding levels be assessed for competitiveness and the potential to fund PhD students beyond the fourth year.

The school of graduate studies encourages the department to institute strategies to promote more timely completion which would enable funds to be diverted to 'in-program' students creating higher funding packages. A culture of providing graduate research assistant fellowships whenever possible across physical and human geography would also enhance student support.

The department responded that it's actively monitoring graduate student completion times with a focus on the PhD program. The department stated that it plans to remain vigilant and to work to promote shorter times to completion.

Co-location

Both sets of reviewers recommended that the previously independent units co-locate. It was further suggested that space planning, if handled sensitively and with the goal of ensuring the needs of all participants, will result in many opportunities for collaboration and growth.

The head of the department responded that it is indeed the goal to move towards a more cohesive unit by ensuring that space considerations satisfy the needs of the faculty and students, especially those in the MPL program. Co-location will address the access to staffing issue as well as overall governance of the new unit. Moving ahead, the Executive Committee will draft a space plan that helps address space costs while at the same time provides high quality space to all faculty, staff and graduate students in the department. The response went on to say that the department would be seeking assistance from the faculty of arts and science to realize the renovations necessary to ensure new space meets the necessary requirement for the MPL program and the department overall.

The following are the recommendations made by the SCPRC and approved by the provost.

Implementation Plan:

	Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
1.	Conduct a review of the structure and financial sustainability of all of its programs to ensure resources available to the department are being used effectively and can be leveraged to build on existing strengths within the unit.	Head of department initiates discussion with associate dean and faculty financial officer	Head of department to lead Dean, Arts and Science to monitor	Deans of faculty of arts and science’s report to the vice-provost (teaching and learning) September 2017
2.	Continue to support the ongoing integration of academic programming and building of a positive working environment by completing a curriculum review that pays particular attention to the undergraduate curriculum and the MPL program. The curriculum review should be completed in consultation with the Centre for Teaching and Learning.	Head of department initiates conversation with centre for teaching and learning	Head of department to lead Dean, Arts and Science to monitor	Deans of faculty of arts and science’s report to the vice-provost (teaching and learning) September 2017

The dean of arts and science shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan. The details of progress made will be presented in writing to the provost and vice-provost (teaching and learning) and filed in the office of the provost and vice-principal (academic). Monitoring reports will be posted on the university web site.

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

July 26, 2016
Approval Date

Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)

Signature

Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies

Signature

Dean, Arts and Science

Signature

Final status of Geography and Planning Programs

Approved to Continue

Date of next program review

2023/24 Academic Year