

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
UNIVERSITY PROGRAM REVIEW (UPR)
REPORT ON: ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
 January 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Review Preparation

In preparing this document, the Program Development Committee reviewed the following: Environmental Studies' Self-Study (SS) (2010/11), the report of the external reviewers (ER) (May 2015), the response from the Program Chair (PC) (February 2015), and the response from the Assistant Dean (March 2015) to the above material. The external reviewers were: Dr. Karen Beazley, School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, Dr. Ted Toadvine, Department of Philosophy, University of Oregon, and Dr. Edwin Tam, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Windsor.

Program Overview

The Bachelor of Environmental Studies (BES) Honours program is housed in the Centre for Inter-Faculty Programs. The BES "provides an integrated, systems-based perspective of understanding human interaction with the environment." Students in the program study complex human-environmental situations by analyzing "the social, cultural, economic, political, legal and ethical factors affecting human interaction with the environment, helping them understand the many inter-related dimensions of environmental issues and formulate effective strategies" to address human impact on the environment. (SS, p. 5)

Enrolments

Undergraduate

| | Fall 2011 | Fall 2012 | Fall 2013 | Fall 2014 | Fall 2015 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Full-Time | 103 | 103 | 121 | 106 | 88 |
| Part-Time | 16 | 15 | 17 | 8 | 9 |

Human Resources

Faculty/Instructors

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Assistant Provost | 1 |
| Program Chair | 1 |
| Sessional Lecturer | 1 |

Full/Part-time Staff

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Academic Coordinator | 1 full-time |
| Receptionist | 1 full-time |

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT (with Implementation Plan)

Significant Strengths of the Programs

The External Reviewers' noted that "The program is, by its nature, innovative insofar as it aspires to create a fully interdisciplinary degree path throughout the four years of the major. [...] The careful construction of the curriculum from a wide range of courses from throughout the University, oriented by two Areas of Concentration (Resource Management and Environmental Values and Policies), also demonstrates a creative and innovative approach to the challenge of interdisciplinary education." (ER, p.4)

Opportunities for Program Improvement/Enhancements

"This BES program has significant opportunities to build partnerships with diverse community stakeholders, including NGOs, indigenous peoples, industry, business, government, and the broad public. These interactions could include collaborative grants and projects, and could engage BES and other undergraduate students. In so doing, the BES program could evolve into a distinct program unlike others on campus." (ER, p.11)

"One of the acknowledged strengths of the BES program is the diversity of courses and therefore faculty involvement from other faculties. At the same time, this poses the greatest challenge: there is no direct ownership and therefore incentive for faculty outside of the limited BES instructional pool to be heavily involved in developing, delivering, and improving the BES curriculum." (ER, p.6) In addition to the lack of faculty appointed specifically to the BES program, and upcoming faculty retirements will impact the ability to offer core BES courses if they are not replaced with faculty with the same expertise. (ER, p.6) Although much of the human and physical resource issues extend beyond the purview of the BES program, the external reviewers' recommendations relating to resources were included in this report to the extent that BES can address them.

The external reviewers also noted that "the BES exists as a program within an interfaculty unit that lacks the typical means of acquiring, justifying and even negotiating for resources." (ER, p.7) The Assistant Provost has "explicit responsibilities for administering its programs without the corresponding authority or power; much depended on the "good will" of participants from other faculties." (ER, p.7) The structure of Inter-Faculty Programs and the tensions, relating to ownership of programs and resource allocations, between IFP and participating Faculties need to be addressed, as these "may hinder the further development of the BES program" and prevent "key stakeholders within IFP, FAHSS, and Science from recognizing strategic opportunities for collaboration that could benefit all parties." (ER, p.7, p.10)

Essentially, the greatest opportunity for improvement for the BES program is to address the issue and status of IFP. However, this University Program Review (UPR) is about a single program administered by the Centre for Inter-Faculty Programs and not about a review of IFP itself. The issue of the status of IFP does not fall under the purview of the BES program and is more appropriately addressed elsewhere, outside of this UPR. The issue of the structure and status of IFP, including the question of incorporating it in the bylaws, must be dealt with by the University and has been forwarded to the Provost and Deans Council.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recommendations (in priority order)

(Final recommendations arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers report, the Program Chair's response and the Assistant Provost's response.)

Curriculum

Recommendation 1: That the program complete the planned curriculum review including:

- a) comparing the BES program learning outcomes to the actual curriculum, delivery, and means of assessment;
- b) modifying/integrating courses to address overlaps/duplication, especially in Earth and Environmental Sciences (EES);

- c) incorporating more social sciences and humanities into the degree to lessen the overemphasis on natural sciences and make this a more interdisciplinary curriculum;
- d) adding more integrative BES courses into the curriculum (ideally one per year) and explicitly assessing the broader thinking and integrative learning outcomes;
- e) consider creating a senior level capstone course, including integrating a direct measure of learning outcomes, that allows students to employ their skills and knowledge gained through their BES degree.

Agents: Program Chair, Program Council, Assistant Provost, Inter-Faculty Council, Centre for Teaching and Learning, relevant Departments and Faculties

Completion by: Fall 2016

Recommendation 2: That the Program submit learning outcomes and assessment methods for each of its "58-xxx" courses that clearly correspond to the University's stated "Characteristics of a University of Windsor Graduate".

[Program-level learning outcomes were revised in March 2013 (see Self-Study).]

Agents: Inter-Faculty Council, CTL, Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning

Completion by: Fall 2016

Alumni

Recommendation 3: That the BES:

- a) continue tracking alumni placement and develop regular post-graduation surveys that assess its success in achieving program outcomes and matching these with career skills and preparation for post-graduate study; and
- b) involve alumni in the program, *e.g.* student talks, career mentoring, internship opportunities, collaborators in community partnerships.

Agents: Program Chair, Assistant Provost

Completion by: Annual Review

Resources

Recommendation 4: That the program and the Assistant Provost work with relevant Faculties and Departments to encourage joint faculty appointments especially in social science areas that would fill curricular gaps not currently serviced by existing faculty.

Agents: Program Chair, Assistant Provost, relevant Faculties and Departments

Completion by: Fall 2016

Recommendation 5: That the BES work with the Assistant Provost to seek funding for a community outreach coordinator to manage and develop internships and placements for the the BES and all IFP programs.

Agents: Program Chair, Assistant Provost

Completion by: Annual Review

Recommendation 6: That the program, working with the Assistant Provost and the Space Allocation Committee, seek to identify adequate student space and adequate space for instructional and administrative staff.

Agents: Program Chair, Assistant Provost, Space Allocation Committee

Completion by: Annual Review