



Bachelor of Arts and Community Studies Quality Assurance Review

Executive Summary

On May 11, 2017, a letter from the Interim Vice-President Academic and Provost (VPA&P), Dr. Richard MacKinnon, was sent to the Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences (SASS) at the time, Dr. Arja Vainio-Mattila, launching a review of the Bachelor of Arts Community Studies. In response to this, Dr. Vainio-Mattila oversaw the implementation of the BACS Review Committee (RC) in June 2017. The first meeting of the RC took place on June 27, 2017, at which time a timeline for the review was prepared for submission to the Office of the VPA&P.

The first full draft of the self-study report was submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee of Senate (QAC) on February 9, 2018. Revisions were suggested and the finalized report was submitted to the Office of the VPA&P on March 6, 2018. This report was sent to the external reviewers in preparation for the external site visit.

The site visit took place on April 3-4, 2018. The two external reviewers –Dr. David Creelman, Chair and Professor, Department of Humanities and Languages, University of New Brunswick in Saint John, and Dr. Gordon E. Smith, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science and Professor, Dan School of Drama and Music, Queen’s University—were assisted by CBU faculty member, Dr. Matthias Bierenstiel. The visit involved meetings with a broad cross-section of faculty, staff, and students, as well as tours of the various facilities connected to the BACS program.

In their report, submitted to the VPA&P on June 12, 2018, the external reviewers described the BACS program as “a uniquely innovative program, one that embraces critical aspects of teaching, learning, and research in powerful ways, indeed a model for post-secondary education in our ever-changing worlds.” They see it to be well aligned with the mission of the institution, and found it to be carefully designed, achieving its program objectives and goals.

In addition to their strong positive commentary on key quality assurance elements, the external reviewers do specify nine distinct recommendations for improvements in the Quality Assurance Review Recommendations section of their report, as well as a few additional recommendations embedded within other sections. These recommendations can be grouped into three categories: (1) Governance & University-wide Recommendations, (2) Human Resources, and (3) Program Identity & Recruitment.

1. Governance & University-wide Recommendations

1.1 Governance – *To ensure effective advocacy and to provide a champion, BACS needs an identified representative within the administrative structure. The advocate should be at least the equivalent of a departmental chair for BACS, though it would be more effective if BACS were represented at the level of Assistant Dean.*

1.2 Part-time Instructors – *Provide greater security for ICA instructors by forging a collective agreement with part-time faculty employees*

1.3 Retention and Persistence – *Help CBU develop a persistence strategy based on the best practices developed by BACS.*

2. Human Resources

2.1 Faculty Renewal – *Strengthen and renew the faculty complement by hiring two new faculty members. The first of these should be in the area of Sport and Physical Activity Leadership (SPAL) and the second could be in Indigenous studies*

2.2 Indigenization – *Deepen Indigenization by pairing BACS full-time and part-time Indigenous professors to co-teach key COMS courses in Mi'kmaq communities.*

2.3 Program Advising – *The university faculty, especially in degree programs whose students are most regularly cross-listed in the BACS degree, should be trained to assume some of the advising load for BACS students*

3. Program Identity & Recruitment

3.1 International – *Strengthen BACS/International connections by promoting on-line COMS courses, recruitment, and advising.*

3.2 Program Marketing – *Develop a comprehensive nation-wide marketing strategy based on a robust on-line presence to promote the distinctive BACS program.*

3.3 Program Branding – *Consider rebranding the BACS program.*

The BACS RC submitted a response to the external reviewers' report to the Office of the VPA&P on June 29, 2018. The response was reviewed by the QAC, together with the external reviewers' report. The QAC submitted comments to the VPA&P for consideration in his response. The final report was submitted to Senate for approval at the November 9, 2018 meeting.