

**Executive Summary**

On April 22, 2016, a letter from the Vice President Academic and Provost (VPA&P), Dr. Dale Keefe, was sent to the Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences (SASS), Dr. Arja Vainio-Mattila, launching the review of the Bachelor of Arts. In response to this, Dr. Vainio-Mattila sent the composition of the Review Committee (RC) to Dr. Keefe on May 19, 2016. The first meeting of the RC took place on June 16, 2016, 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 17, 2017. Revisions were suggested and the finalized report was submitted on March 27, 2017. This report was sent to the external reviewers in preparation for the external site visit.

The site visit took place on April 10-11, 2017. The two external reviewers Dr. Neb Kujundzic, Dean of Arts at the University of Prince Edward Island, and Dr. Moira Howes, Dean of Arts and Science at Trent University were assisted by CBU faculty member, Dr. Doug Lionais. The visit involved meetings with a broad cross-section of faculty and staff, as well as tours of the various facilities connected to the BA program.

In their report, submitted to the VPA&P on May 7, 2017, the external reviewers found that the BA programs “meet or exceed degree level expectations” and the BA curriculum “provides students with an excellent and high quality education”. They were impressed with the commitment demonstrated by faculty to the education of their students. They expressed concerns with the complexity of the degree structure and a need for improvements to marketing and recruitment efforts. In all, they articulated eight recommendations, restated here.

**Recommendation 1:** *Engage institution-wide academic planning.* Situating the BA programs within the institution and leveraging their strengths and opportunities to assist the institution as a whole is key. For this, a full-scale academic planning exercise is needed.

**Recommendation 2:** *Streamline BA requirements.* Simple, transparent program requirements for the BA will support student success, increase student satisfaction, and increase retention. It may also enhance recruitment.

**Recommendation 3:** *Require students to choose a major in the second term of their first year.* This change would facilitate enrollment and curriculum planning. It would also serve to increase student commitment and consequently, retention.

**Recommendation 4:** *Better organize student advising.* Centralize and streamline the advising process to improve retention, student success, and student satisfaction.

**Recommendation 5:** *Utilize and promote service teaching strengths.* Expand service teaching opportunities available through BA programs to other programs. Locate service teaching courses in relevant units and have faculty from those units run the service courses. Develop a budget system (if one does not already exist) to allocate resources fairly to service and receiving units.

**Recommendation 6:** *Retain ICAs.* To maintain CBU’s BA programs, retain flexibility in course offerings, and avoid drastic cuts, ICAs must be retained.

**Recommendation 7:** *Improve recruitment and marketing.* The CBU BA should articulate its own “brand,” in a concerted effort to enhance its recruitment and branding strategies.

**Recommendation 8:** *Invest in the academic calendar (print and online).* Students, faculty, and administrators alike are aware of the serious issues with the online calendar and webpages. Improvements will enhance recruitment, retention, and student satisfaction and success.

In their response to the report of the external reviewers, submitted to the Office of the VPA&P on May 19, 2017, the RC grouped these and other smaller recommendations into four categories: Institutional Supports, Degree Structure, The Student Experience, and Faculty and Staff. In his response, the Interim VPA&P, Dr. Richard MacKinnon, identified action items for each of these categories.

**INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS**

Action	Owner	Expected Result	Start Date	End Date
<b>Recruitment and Marketing</b>				
Hold school-wide discussions to collectively articulate the distinctive aspects of the CBU BA.	SASS Dean	Characteristics of the BA that will help with the development of its “brand”.	Jun 2017	Jan 2018
In consultation with Student Affairs (Career Services), articulate career options for BA students and the positive lifelong career outcomes associated with a BA degree.	SASS Committee on Recruitment, Retention and Marketing	Material that can be used for the promotion of the BA.	Jun 2017	Oct 2107
Work with MarComm to establish the unique “brand” of the CBU BA.	SASS Dean	Unique “selling points” to support a marketing and recruitment approach for the BA.	Jan 2018	Jun 2018
Work with MarComm and Recruitment to develop a marketing and recruitment plan for the BA.	SASS Dean, together with the SASS Committee on Recruitment, Retention and Marketing	A clear path forward for the recruitment of BA students.	May 2018	Aug 2018
<b>Academic Calendar</b>				

Bring a summary of the limitations and concerns of the online academic calendar to the President's Council.	VPA&P/Academic Planning Team	A plan for improvements to the online academic calendar.	Jun 2017	Dec 2017
<b>Support for the Mac Platform</b>				
Raise the issue of Mac support with the President's Council/IT Team	VPA&P	A decision on whether or not some level of support will be made available.	Jun 2017	Dec 2017
<b>Involvement of the Library in the BA</b>				
Together with the Dean of the Library and the SASS Liaison Librarian, explore options for expanding the library's role in the BA.	SASS Dean	Enhanced curricula and increased experiential learning opportunities	Jun 2017	Dec 2017

## DEGREE STRUCTURE

Action	Owner	Expected Result	Start Date	End Date
<b>Streamline BA Requirements</b>				
Invite a representative from Western University to come to campus to meet with the appropriate faculty and staff.	SASS Dean	A clearer, widespread understanding of a different model and the benefits it presents.	Sept 2017	Sept 2017
Look at the potential of more common degree structures across multiple CBU degrees that would allow greater flexibility for students, particularly in terms of minors. This includes the consideration of a foundation year and increased flexibility for dual degrees and diploma/degree options.	Academic Planning Team	A decision on whether or not the changes to the BA degree structure should be tied to changes to other degrees.	Jun 2017	Dec 2017
<b>BA/BSc Mathematics and Psychology</b>				
Host a discussion between the SASS Dean's Council, the Chairs of Mathematics and Psychology, and the SST Dean on how the BA and BSc programs in these disciplines can be differentiated.	SASS Dean	An understanding of whether or not changes to the BA/BSc in Mathematics and Psychology are needed in order to differentiate the programs.	Jun 2017	Dec 2017

## THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Action	Owner	Expected Result	Start Date	End Date
<b>Declaration of Major</b>				
Develop a plan to require students to declare their major at the end of their first year.	VPA/Academic Planning Team	Better course planning and student understanding of academic pathways.	Jan 2018	July 2018
<b>Student Advising</b>				

Bring forward a proposal to the Academic Planning Team that addresses academic advising, particularly for upper-year students.	SASS Student Chairs	Improved student understanding of academic pathways, leading to improved retention.	Jun 2017	Jan 2018
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#### **FACULTY AND STAFF**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Expected Result</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>
<b><i>Service Courses</i></b>				
Conduct a review of the role of services courses within the School.	SASS Teaching Committee	Course offerings that best serve the BA, as well as other programs that rely on service teaching done by BA disciplines.	Jun 2017	Dec 2017
<b><i>ICAs</i></b>				
Establish principles that govern the use of ICAs	VPA&P/Academic Planning Team	Clear guidance for the use of ICAs	Jun 2017	Dec 2017

The Final Report, including the Self-Study, the External Reviewers' Report, the RC Response to the External Reviewers' Report, and the VPA&P Response, was submitted to Senate as a notice of motion on June 9, 2017.