



Centre for Teaching & Learning Quality Assurance Review

Executive Summary

On Jun 6, 2019, a letter from the Vice-President Academic and Provost (VPA), Dr. Richard MacKinnon, was sent to the Associate Vice-President, Academic & Research, Tanya Brann-Barrett, launching a review of the CTL (Centre for Teaching & Learning). In response to this, Dr. Brann-Barrett identified a Review Committee (RC) chair, who subsequently submitted the composition of the RC to the Office of the VPA on August 15, 2019, followed by the submission of a proposed timeline.

The RC held meetings and were engaged in an intensive information-gathering phase from October 2019 to March 2020, examining large volumes of data gathered through CBU's strategic (2018) and academic (2019) planning processes and meeting with a series of small stakeholder groups. In the winter of 2020, a faculty survey was being prepared to be administered when the global pandemic struck. The CTL immediately played a significant role in supporting faculty through an abrupt lockdown but did manage to continue to make some progress on the self-study. In April 2020, the CTL distributed the survey, which now included a section on the CTL's response to the March transition to remote delivery of courses. The survey closed in late April, results tabulated, and meetings held (virtually) to discuss the results.

Shortly thereafter, in May 2020, the university made the decision to deliver all fall courses online. This resulted in a pause in the progress of the RC, as all CTL efforts were turned to preparing for a fully online term and subsequently in September, to the demands of such delivery. The work of the RC resumed in February 2021 with members working to fill remaining gaps and making substantive changes to the draft document that had been prepared prior to the pause. The significant evolution of the CTL that occurred while responding to the move to online learning – in terms of resources added, the interaction with more faculty than ever before, and vital role the centre began to play in the educational mission of the university – resulted in the need to enhance the critical analysis portion of the self-study and influenced the recommendations generated by the RC.

The first full draft of the self-study report was submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) on July 19, 2021. With a large turn-over in membership of the QAC at the time, there was a slight delay in convening a meeting and acquainting members to their roles. The QAC discussed the draft self-study at their October 26 and November 9, 2021, meeting and provided feedback to the RC on November 12, 2021. The RC made edits to the document and resubmitted on December 12, 2021. On December 14, 2021, the QAC met and agreed the self-study could be sent to the review team that day.

Review team members were identified in November 2021 and the virtual site visit was held January 26-28, 2022. The two external reviewers – **Dr. Jeff Banks**, *Vice-Provost Teaching & Learning Excellence and Director of Open Acadia, Acadia University*, and **Dr. Rhonda Dubec**, *Coordinator of Instructional Development, Teaching Commons & Department of Languages, Lakehead University* - were assisted by senior CBU faculty member in the education department and former Dean, School of Education and Health, **Dr. Carolin Kreber**. The visit, outlined in the site visit agenda found in this document at the end of the External Reviewers' Report, involved meetings with a broad cross-section of faculty, staff, and students. Since the visit was virtual, a tour of facilities was accommodated using the [CBU Virtual Tour](#) and a few photos sent in advance of the site visit.

In their report, submitted to the VPA on March 22, 2022, the external reviewers were complimentary of the work of the CTL, while identifying several areas for improvement and investment. Their recommendations were embedded under 15 headings. These have been reorganized into action-oriented statements under five amalgamated themes: (1) Internal Communication and Governance; (2) Faculty Development; (3) Scholarship of Teaching and Learning; and (4) Online Learning.

Theme 1: Internal Communication and Governance

- 1.1 Working with Marketing and Communications, establish an online presence on CBU.CA, with careful consideration to which resources can be moved from the intranet to the website. At a minimum, information about the unit's services, CTL team profiles, and links to intranet resources should be made easily accessible on CBU.CA.
- 1.2 In collaboration with the Senate Executive,
 - a) Determine the appropriate relationship between the CTL and Senate, with particular attention to Academic Committee and its role in approving new courses and programs.
 - b) Support a review of the mandate and bylaws of the Teaching, Learning, and Evaluation Committee of Senate (TLEC (Teaching, Learning & Education Committee)), in relation to the role of a strengthened CTL.*
- 1.3 Establish more formal links between the CTL and those with synergistic roles at the university, such as Writing Centre staff, librarians, IT and Facilities Management personnel, and those involved with program development.

Theme 2: Faculty Development

- 2.1 Continue to work to improve access for sessional instructors, ensuring sessional instructors have timely system access (working with IT) and information on available training and development.
- 2.2 Develop tools and professional development opportunities on:
 - a) inquiry-based learning pedagogies.
 - b) academic integrity, including understanding cultural differences and creating "less cheatable" options for assignments and assessments.
 - c) means of formative, self- and peer-assessment.
 - d) various learning technologies for in-person, online, and dual-mode delivery, including an emphasis on instructional flexibility to support the transition between learning environments.
- 2.3 Identify the role the CTL should play in decolonizing the curriculum and the university and specify what is needed to enable the unit to do this work.
- 2.4 Implement mentorship and/or community of practice models that provide support to new faculty and ongoing development and connection for more experienced faculty members.

Theme 3: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

- 3.1 Strengthen the Teaching Chairs program through clear deliverables tied to SoTL and tighter integration with the operations of the CTL.
- 3.2 Develop a system to archive and curate relevant materials created by Teaching Chairs.
- 3.3 Take the leadership on hosting an annual SoTL event that showcases teaching, provides workshops, and brings in a renowned scholar to address the campus community.

Theme 4: Online Learning

- 4.1 In alignment with the SEM (Strategic Enrollment Management) outcomes and in consultation with the school deans, lead the process to develop a comprehensive eLearning strategy for the university.

The final report was submitted to Senate in June 2022 for approval at the June 20, 2022 meeting. Through the VPA's response, the CTL was asked to submit an action plan to the Office of the VPA by August 31, 2022.