



Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education

Response to the Departmental Review Report

The Department developed a self-study document for the departmental review in 2013 -14 and submitted to the Dean in August of 2014. The site visit was held from February 4 – 6, 2015, and the Department received the Review Report on March 4, 2015. Subsequently, members of the department met on two occasions to discuss the report and the recommendations that it contains, and to develop priorities and action strategies to address the recommendations.

Department Retreat

The first discussion was held at a half-day retreat held on May 28, 2015.

The purpose of the retreat was to discuss issues that are important to address in considering the further development of the Department, using the recommendations that were made in the departmental review report. Also included was a discussion of issues that department members believed need to be addressed, that were not included in the report.

The intended outcome of the retreat was to develop a prioritized list of issues and create tentative action planning activities designed to address them.

The recommendations from the department review report were:

1. The Review Committee sees the tension between individual programs and the collective whole as a structural source of distrust and competitiveness and therefore as a significant barrier to progress. To help resolve this, the department is encouraged to begin active efforts toward surfacing and agreeing upon the ingredients of a coherent collective identity, set of goals, and future plan.
2. Efforts to achieve a more widespread appreciation for the fiscal realities being managed by the Dean's Office generally, as well as the implications for planning at the level of the department and its programs, might also serve to reduce the sense of competitiveness between programs within the department that arises from misunderstandings of how decisions are made.
3. The department is encouraged to continue involvement in and expansion of BEd cohort themes in order to strengthen ECPS presence in the teacher education program.
4. The department is encouraged to develop a faculty renewal plan with a focus on diversity.
5. Junior and mid- career faculty members would benefit from a well- thought- out mentoring program with a focus on career development and progression.
6. The department would benefit from a discussion on a collective approach to cross- cultural understanding, indigenization and internationalization.
7. It seems an appropriate time to move beyond the current model of silo academic units and explore the potential benefits of expanded interactions, collaborations and synergies between units and across the department.

The retreat was attended by 25 members of the Department and several more participated through live blogging.

Following the retreat, Dr. Cay Holbrook and Dr. Bill Borgen reviewed the minutes and blog comments and developed a list of possible task items to be addressed.

Tasks identified at the ECPS Retreat were the following (along with italicized list of associated Review Report recommendations).

- Write a departmental response to the report
- Develop a more organized mentoring system for junior faculty members
- (5) Junior and mid-career faculty members would benefit from a well-thought-out mentoring program with a focus on career development and progression.
- Address how we communicate about ourselves (handbook, etc.)
- Strike a sub-committee of faculty members that includes those who joined the department after the merger to come up with a plan for a departmental structure that would better support a more collective identity (role of council)
- (1) The Review Committee sees the tension between individual programs and the collective whole as a structural source of distrust and competitiveness and therefore as a significant barrier to progress. To help resolve this, the department is encouraged to begin active efforts toward surfacing and agreeing upon the ingredients of a coherent collective identity, set of goals, and future plan.
- (7) It seems an appropriate time to move beyond the current model of silo academic units and explore the potential benefits of expanded interactions, collaborations and synergies between units and across the department.
- Create opportunities for meaningful discussion at the department level
- Discuss and problem-solve how we can effectively work together given fragmented and limited space

Following are the recommendations from the report not included in tasks above:

- (2) Efforts to achieve a more widespread appreciation for the fiscal realities being managed by the Dean's Office generally, as well as the implications for planning at the level of the department and its programs, might also serve to reduce the sense of competitiveness between programs within the department that arises from misunderstandings of how decisions are made.
- (3) The department is encouraged to continue involvement in and expansion of B.Ed. cohort themes in order to strengthen ECPS presence in the teacher education program.
- (4) The department is encouraged to develop a faculty renewal plan with a focus on diversity.
- (6) The department would benefit from a discussion on a collective approach to cross-cultural understanding, indigenization and internationalization.

Department Meeting

The second department discussion was held at a regularly scheduled department meeting on June 18, 2015. Twenty-four faculty members and four staff members attended the meeting. The purpose of our discussion at this meeting was:

- To discuss and prioritize the tasks, with a view to focusing on three or four tasks initially and the addressing the others in a second phase of the process.
- To create task forces to begin to address the first three or four of the agreed upon tasks.

The agenda of the meeting of the Department on June 18th included a further consideration of actions related to the recommendations in the departmental review report. A summary of the retreat discussion was provided to department members prior to the Department meeting and provided a basis for the discussion.

Discussion initially focused on the document distributed prior to the Department meeting which summarized and grouped the discussion points and blog posts that arose from the retreat. The result of this discussion was a regrouping of some points and a decision to initially focus on the creation of task forces related to four issues.

In light of this decision the following motion was passed:

Motion: Grouping of issues as listed above are accepted and endorsed by the Department. - *Approved*

Set up Task Forces to Address the Following Issues: - Mentoring - Department Structure - Faculty Renewal - Diversity

Motion: All faculty members (who are not on leave) are expected to participate in at least one task force. - *Approved*

Terms of References for each Task Force:

- Develop a plan for addressing the issues covered by the task force
- Bring the plan to the Department for discussion and endorsement
- The Department will seek resources required to support the work of the task force
- The task force will execute the plan according to a set timeline that is endorsed by the department
- The Chair of each task force will be determined by a discussion by members of the task force

Motion: The Terms of References are endorsed and task forces are required to meet within 30 days. - *Approved.*

Note: A survey will be sent to faculty and staff members that will ask them to indicate their top two choices for membership in the task forces. It was recommended by faculty at the department meeting that the Head and Deputy Head review the choices for balance of representation across task forces.

Task Forces *(Listed in Alphabetical Order)*

Departmental Structure and Communication

This Task Force will address issues that are based on recommendations from the retreat and recommendations 2 and 7 from the report related to departmental structure including the following:

- Strike a sub-committee of faculty members, including those who joined the department after the merger to come up with a plan for a departmental structure that would better support a more collective identity (role of council)
- Create opportunities for meaningful discussion at the department level
- Address how we communicate about ourselves (handbooks, etc.) faculty, sessionals and students.
- Discuss and problem-solve how we can effectively work together given fragmented and limited space

Review Recommendations related to the work of this Task Force

(1) The Review Committee sees the tension between individual programs and the collective whole as a structural source of distrust and competitiveness and therefore as a significant barrier to progress. To help resolve this, the department is encouraged to begin active efforts toward surfacing and agreeing upon the ingredients of a coherent collective identity, set of goals, and future plan.

(8) It seems an appropriate time to move beyond the current model of silo academic units and explore the potential benefits of expanded interactions, collaborations and synergies between units and across the department.

Diversity

This Task Force will address issues that are based on recommendations from the review.

Review Recommendations related to the work of this Task Force

(6) The department would benefit from a discussion on a collective approach to cross-cultural understanding, indigenization and internationalization.

Faculty Renewal

This Task Force will address issues that are based on recommendations from the review. :

Review Recommendations related to the work of this Task Force

(4) The department is encouraged to develop a faculty renewal plan with a focus on diversity.

The work of this task force also will include consideration of ways to address the following recommendation from the review.

(1) Efforts to achieve a more widespread appreciation for the fiscal realities being managed by the Dean's Office generally, as well as the implications for planning at the level of the department and its programs, might also serve to reduce the sense of competitiveness between programs within the department that arises from misunderstandings of how decisions are made.

Mentoring

This Task Force will address issues that are based on recommendations from the review.

Review Recommendations related to the work of this Task Force

(5) Junior and mid-career faculty members would benefit from a well-thought-out mentoring program with a focus on career development and progression.

The following recommendations from the report are not included in the four task forces.

It was believed that the departmental involvement in teacher education is broad and multi-faceted, and needs to be more extensively publicized.

(3) The department is encouraged to continue involvement in and expansion of B.Ed. cohort themes in order to strengthen ECPS presence in the teacher education program.

Another Task that arose in the retreat was seen to be appropriate following the actions of the task forces. It was:

Writing a departmental response to the review report

Timeline

The tasks forces will be formed in July of 2015 and will continue their work into the fall and winter terms.