



# Quality Assurance Cyclical Undergraduate Program Review – Executive Summary and Implementation Plan

School of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

March 2020

## **Programs covered by this cyclical review:**

Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation

Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation - Transfer Pathways

Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation (with Concentration in Nature-Based Therapeutic Recreation)

Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation (with Concentration in Nature-Based Therapeutic Recreation) – Transfer

BA (Geography Major)/Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation

BA (History Major)/Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation

BSc (Natural Science Major)/Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation

BA (Women's Studies)/Honours Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation

Bachelor of Outdoor Recreation 4 Yr

HBOR, BEd (Outdoor Recreation) P/J

HBOR, BEd (Outdoor Recreation) I/S

## **Executive Summary**

In accordance with the Lakehead University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and the Ontario Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), the Department of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism submitted a self-study (December 2018). Volume I presented the undergraduate program descriptions and outcomes, an analytical assessment of the programs, and program information along with institutional information and statistical data. Volume II provided course syllabi. Volume III provided the CVs for core faculty and one contract lecturer contributing to the delivery of the programs.

The Review Team for this cyclical program review included two external reviewers and one internal reviewer selected by the Senate Academic Quality Assurance Sub-Committee (SAC-QA) from a set of proposed reviewers. The reviewers examined materials and completed a two-day site visit on February 28-March 1, 2019. The site visit included meetings with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Deputy Provost, Dean of Social Sciences and Humanities, the Director of the School, full-time, tenure-track faculty members, the technical staff, a group of

undergraduate students, the University Librarian and Liaison Librarian, the Administrative Assistant for the Department, the Vice-Provost (International) and Manager International and a group of alumni and community partners. The Review Team toured the Thunder Bay campus including classrooms, offices, the Chancellor Paterson Library including the Teaching Commons and Northern Studies Research Centre (fifth floor); the group study spaces; and the Virtual Reality/Makerspace 3-D Printing room and the ORPT Equipment Depot on Tungsten Street.

In their report (25 April 2019), the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the programs delivered by the School of Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism meet the Quality Assurance Framework evaluation criteria and align with the University mission, strategic plan and academic plan. The Review Team noted that the programs are of high quality and offer students a regionally connected and learner-centred experience supported by the creative and scholarly contributions of the six full-time faculty members and some highly qualified Contract Lecturers.

At the undergraduate level, students must meet the standard University admission policies which are appropriate for the Program Learning Outcomes. Curriculum structure and delivery, and teaching and assessment methods are appropriate, are aligned with few comparable programs across Canada at the undergraduate level, reflect the current state of the discipline, and are effective in preparing graduates to meet defined program outcomes and the University's Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations.

The Review Team noted several strengths of the Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism programs and summarized them as follows:

- Very cohesive and committed student body;
- Excellent faculty/student relationship. Students were effusive in their praise of faculty availability and openness;
- The faculty are an extraordinarily dedicated and innovative group that employ experiential education in every facet of the program;
- There is a unity and strong sense of community within the unit;
- The faculty are clearly student centered and are committed to teaching and faculty/student relationships are clearly valued and a focus;
- The recent decision to abandon the graduate program and refocus on undergraduate education has provided the opportunity for a thorough review and revision of the undergraduate program leading to enhanced experiential learning throughout the four years of the program;
- The program has a deep history in the region and a number of major events and organizations in the Thunder Bay Area owe their existence to the ORPT program;

- There is a strong community connection, as evidenced by the number of organizations that cooperate with the program through a variety of courses, placements, and activities. This results in many graduates remaining in the area after graduation despite being from southern Ontario and elsewhere;
- There is a strong and supportive alumni;
- Well-developed indigenous content at the first and third year levels aligns with university priorities and provides further opportunities for community engagement;
- The expertise and skills of the faculty complement one another and reflect the state of knowledge in their fields;
- The HBOR exhibits a high level of integration of theory, practice and experiential learning throughout the program as evidenced by course outlines, conversations with current students, alumni, and faculty, and;;
- The required fourth year field placement provides students with opportunities to develop their professional skills and work on their career development skills. It is apparent from meeting with practicum employers that the skills the students bring are highly valued and often expand opportunities for the employers.

Responses to the Review Team were received from the Director of the School (July 2019), and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (July 2019 and January 2020). Clarifications and corrections were presented followed by a response to each of the recommendations made by the Review Team.

A Final Assessment Report (FAR) has been prepared to provide a synthesis of the external evaluation and internal response to the recommendations. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The Implementation Plan identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the FAR; who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Implementation Plan (Part A): Program Responsibilities

Implementation of the Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility*	Timeline
Develop appropriate documentation related to Bona Fide Occupational Requirements/Requisite Skills and Abilities (addresses Recommendation 1, ).	Working with SAS and OHRE, determine appropriate documentation and draft for implementation	School Director*, assisted by Technical Staff, Dean FSSH, School members	September 2020
Ongoing review of curriculum and program structure (addresses Recommendations 2 3, 4, 5, 6, 12).	As part of annual School retreat, consider alignment of courses and content with current practice and resources.	School Director *, School members	Annual
Develop a clear progression of writing assignments (addresses Recommendation 7)	Develop internal guidelines to assist instructors with consistency in writing expectations at each year level.	School Director *, School members, Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning	September 2020
Develop a consistent approach to assessing group work by students (addresses Recommendation 8)	Develop internal guidelines to assist instructors to apply methods of evaluation that are fair and equitable across the range of student abilities and engagement	School Director *, School members, Dean FSSH, Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning	September 2020
Explore additional opportunities for students to obtain First Aid certification (addresses Recommendation 9)	Identify within program options and develop a plan for implementation, if appropriate.	Assigned to a faculty member of the School	April 2020

Explore ways to support and strengthen the partnership between the Outdoor Recreation Students Society (ORSS) and the School (addresses Recommendation 10)	Recognizing existing ORSS/School parameters, consider options to further engage with the ORSS.	School Director*	December 2019
Consider compiling a history of the School (addresses Recommendation 11)	Prepare a report identifying the benefits and costs of such an undertaking; present to School council for consideration.	Assigned to a faculty member of the School	September 2020
Develop plan to address resourcing needs of the School (addresses Recommendations 13 and 14)	Within the framework of the Academic Plan, Strategic Enrolment Management and Integrated Planning and Budgeting, work with the Dean of FSSH to develop a plan.	Dean FSSH*, all School members	July 2020
Continue to explore opportunities to leverage resources at the undergraduate and graduate levels to support program options (addresses Recommendation 15)	Develop a summary of existing collaborations and possible new opportunities; present to School Council to identify next steps.	School Director*, subset of School faculty members.	September 2020
<b>Note – as all Academic Units will be developing their response to the Academic Plan (2019-2024), some of these items may be addressed as part of this process.</b>			

### Implementation Plan (Part B): Decanal & Administration Responsibilities

Implementation of the Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility*	Timeline
<b>Meet regularly with Department to monitor progress on the Implementation Plan**</b>	Report to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) as part of the Annual Review process	Dean SSH*	Annually

\*indicates individual or office with responsibility

\*\*Note - The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the School Director shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Reports and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).