



Kwantlen
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Program Review Committee
Issues Arising

January, 2006



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January 16, 2006

Dr. Robert Fleming
Acting Vice-President, Academic Services
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Dear Rob:

The following is a summary of the issues arising from the Program Review Committee's meetings during the Fall of 2006. These issues are directly or indirectly related to the shift towards Kwantlen establishing itself as a Special Purpose University. Consequently, the resolution of these issues will directly impact the success of Kwantlen as it seeks this new direction.

At this point, the Program Review Committee needs to recommend future directions; however, these recommendations will likely have resource and budgetary implications that are beyond the mandate for the Committee. As such, we are seeking direction from Senior Leadership in our decision-making process.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carolyn Robertson
Chair, Program Review Committee

Issues Arising, Fall 2006 Program Review Committee

The primary purpose of effective program review is to ensure that Kwantlen University College engages in a process of information gathering and inquiry that informs its teaching and service so that it can continue to provide quality educational experiences for students. The Program Review Committee is continuing to develop a program review process that assists Kwantlen in this purpose.

The program review process currently being implemented as a pilot project at Kwantlen involves internal self-study and assessment. Indicators have been established to provide a framework for programs undergoing review; data elements have been identified and are being made available through the Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning. A process for reporting to Education Council has been outlined through Policy B.12 and a review cycle of every three years has been established.

Requirements of AUCC Membership and DQAB Exemption:

In seeking status as a special purpose university, it is understood that Kwantlen will be seeking Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) Exemption and membership in the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). An examination of criteria for both DQAB Exemption (Appendix A) and AUCC membership (Appendix B) indicates that the existing program review process at Kwantlen will need further development. In order for Kwantlen to qualify, the established program review process must include these components:

1. Internal Self-Study – internal review, established by institutional policy, that includes the involvement of faculty, staff, students, and administration.
2. External Review – review by an external expert(s) in the discipline, typically from another post-secondary institution that offers a similar program. This review normally includes a site visit.
3. Internal Accountability – a mechanism established by the governing body, in this case Education Council, which ensures that recommendations arising from a program review are received, implemented, and monitored.

The above components are consistent with those required by similar provincial bodies across Canada that are responsible for setting quality assurance guidelines in their jurisdictions. Appendices C and D provide examples of the elements of program review implemented by post-secondary institutions in Canada. Appendix C includes the processes currently being implemented by the University of Victoria and University College of the Fraser Valley, both of which are AUCC members and DQAB exempt. Appendix D includes the program review

process from McGill University, which meets the criteria set out by the Council of Ontario Universities.

An additional component:

- Internal Peer Review – review by a faculty member(s) from another discipline within the same institution,

is also present in the program review process of a number of post-secondary institutions.

An external review process, and a more clearly defined mechanism for institutional response to recommendations, are necessary components for Kwantlen to include in the program review process in order to qualify for DQAB Exemption and AUCC Membership.

Current Issues Arising from the Program Review Pilot Project:

Five programs have been involved in implementing program reviews as part of a pilot project that began in the Spring of 2005. They are:

- Applied Communications
- Diploma in Marketing Management
- Special Education Teacher Assistant (SETA) Certificate
- Bachelor of Business Administration in Entrepreneurial Leadership
- Bachelor of Applied Arts (Psychology)

Monthly feedback from the areas under review has been compiled for the Program Review Committee over the Fall of 2005. The following concerns and issues regarding resources and support have been identified:

- Time - Each of the areas has been delayed in meeting their self-determined deadlines. A lack of clarity on how to obtain data (which has since been rectified), the time required to gather groups of faculty together for the compilation of data and discussion of key indicator questions, and the time required to coordinate the process of program review have been reported as factors that contribute to a lengthier review time.

While the Program Review Level One Indicators were developed with ease of application in mind, the compilation, interpretation, reflection, discussion, and reporting process is lengthy and involved; opportunities to engage in these activities are limited when the task is added to already established teaching loads and other related duties. One program, the Bachelor of Applied Arts (Psychology), has withdrawn from the pilot program due to the time and work involved in conducting a thorough program review while faculty are also engaged in implementing the new Bachelor of Arts (Major in Psychology) Degree.

- Expertise/Monitoring/Leadership – During the pilot process, each program is undertaking the process of program review in isolation. Information, expertise, monitoring (including impetus), and leadership is limited. There is duplication of tasks as each coordinator/reviewer begins to access information and develop their own review process.
- Quality of Data – Concern has been expressed regarding the quantity and quality of available data currently generated through B.C. College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey (SORS) and BANNER; is there enough data and does it provide the information Kwantlen needs to accurately review programs and be informed in its practice? Some programs have a limited number of years in which data has been collected (one or two years) as well as a limited number of student responses. The current quantity and quality of data available for review has required faculty to utilize additional means of obtaining information, including conducting focus groups and program generated surveys. This additional data collection, compilation, and analysis adds to the workload and time required to complete a program review.

Additional Issues:

A number of additional issues have been identified for discussion and resolution. These include:

- Review Cycle – Changes to the existing process to meet AUCC and DQAB requirements, including the addition of external review, will in all probability result in a more time, resource, and cost intensive program review process. Current Kwantlen policy requires each program to undergo a complete review every three years (Policy B.12). The cost involved in reviewing each program via internal self-study and external review every three years may be prohibitive (there are currently 136 programs offered through Kwantlen). As well, a three year cycle may not allow for sufficient time between program reviews to implement changes based on the recommendations of the current review and collect data on the results of these changes for the next review.

Appendix E provides a table of the program review cycles for AUCC members in B.C. and across Canada. Typically, reviews are completed every 5-10 years; the average length of the review cycle is seven years. The appropriate length of the review cycle for Kwantlen cannot be determined until a final program review process has been established.

- Program Definition and Available Data for First and Second Year Students – The two primary sources of data being used for program review are generated through SORS and BANNER. Quantity issues aside, collecting data for selective entry and cohort citation, certificate, and diploma programs has been a straightforward process as both SORS and BANNER capture components of these students' experiences. As well, SORS and BANNER data can be used to reflect the experiences of third and fourth year students in

degree programs. Capturing the experiences of first and second year students from BANNER and relating them to the degree programs is, however, more problematic.

This is primarily due to the accuracy of a student's program declaration. While students are required to declare their program of study each term, these declarations do not necessarily reflect their *actual* program of study; the data associated with this group of students is not necessarily valid in the context of program review. For example, a student who declares him/herself as a business student is not *required* to take business courses. A student, identified as a business student, may not take business courses in his or her ensuing studies; however this student's experience may be captured and included in, and thus influence the results of, a program review in the School of Business. Answers to questions such as the number of credentials awarded, completions identified, and percentage of students progressing from one level of the program to the next may not be accurate and may not inform future program needs.

To exclude this group of students in a program review is also problematic. An understanding of the experience of first and second year students as they explore their educational and career pathways is critical in a number of decisions made by Kwantlen, including how to support and retain these students for degree work. A sub-committee of the Program Review Committee is currently reviewing program definitions and the assignment of this group of students to determine whether first and second year general undergraduate students should be divided into a separate 'program' or remain distributed amongst the current programs.

- Change in Data – It is possible that the current database supplied by the Ministry on student outcomes, in the form of the B.C. College and Institute Student Outcomes Survey (SORS), will be changing in the next two to three years to reflect a university context. It will come in the form of the University Baccalaureate Graduate Survey (UBGS). A shift in the data base will provide additional challenges.
- Institutional Culture – *How does Kwantlen establish a process and culture that embeds on-going program review as a means of informing its practice and ensuring quality educational programs and services are provided?* While compulsory program review has been mandated by the Ministry of Advanced Education, it has not yet become a standard of practice at Kwantlen University College. Although Kwantlen's Strategic Directions document states that "*As an institution, we focus on learning, quality, and community*", the assessment of quality through regular, standard program reviews has not been firmly established and embedded in the culture of Kwantlen.

The issues outlined above contribute to the barriers and delays in making program review an integral component of all program practice at Kwantlen. However, implementing change of this magnitude is inherently challenging, whether barriers exist or not. How does Kwantlen implement this initiative in a way that supports all members of the

Kwantlen community to engage in program review from a position of inquiry? Strategic and supportive implementation needs to be carefully considered in order to create a culture of inquiry that informs practice and ensures quality educational programs for Kwantlen students.

Next Steps:

The successful implementation of a comprehensive program review process is essential in order for Kwantlen to continue to offer quality educational programs, and to proceed in a new direction to achieve university status. In order to achieve these outcomes, the Program Review Committee is seeking to make recommendations for future directions in program review. These recommendations will necessarily address process, policy, and resources. While process and policy fall within the mandate of the Program Review Committee, the allocation of resources does not. The Program Review Committee is seeking direction from senior leadership on the role of the Committee in making recommendations that may have budgetary implications.

Appendix A

Degree Quality Assessment Board
Exempt Status Interpretive Note

Appendix B

AUCC

Principles of Institutional Quality Assurance in Canadian Higher Education

Appendix C

Elements of Program Review
University of Victoria
and University College of the Fraser Valley

Appendix D

McGill University Academic Program Review Process

Appendix E

Program Review Cycles for AUCC Members