

## FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

### Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

#### Indigenous Studies Program

**Date of Review: February 28, March 1, 2019**

*In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate and graduate programs delivered by the **Indigenous Studies Program**. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.*

*The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.*

#### **Executive Summary of the Review**

The Indigenous Studies Program submitted a self-study in January 31 2019 to the Associate Vice-President, Faculty to initiate the cyclical program review of its undergraduate program. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. Appendices to the self-study contained all course outlines associated with the program and the CVs for each member in the program.

Two arm's length external reviewers, both from Ontario and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, and selected by the Associate Vice-President, Faculty and Associate Vice-President. The review team reviewed the self-study

documentation and then conducted a site visit to McMaster University on February 28th and March 1st 2019. The visit included meetings in the Indigenous Student Services facilities, brief visits to a number of areas including the library and archives, meetings with Indigenous Studies faculty and students and members of the pertinent administrative units.

The Director of the Indigenous Studies Program and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (August 2019). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

## Strengths

In their report (May 2019), the Review team stated that they are very impressed with the program's accomplishments, especially considering its small faculty complement and the practical challenges that developments such as the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report have generated. The reviewers noted the responsiveness to Indigenous community needs and the integration of community-based pedagogies.

The reviewers highlighted the following strengths of the program:

1. Its faculty have exemplary records in terms of both the scholarly work they do, and the rootedness of the faculty in the Indigenous community.

The curriculum delves into most of the topics that constitute the discipline.

2. The program is cognizant of the source of Indigenous knowledge and ensures this is reflected in its pedagogy. Students' community-based learning activities – an integral feature of any Indigenous studies program -- focus mainly on the First Nations proximate to McMaster and involve land-based experiential learning.

The faculty are extremely resourceful in providing current students and alumni with opportunities to acquire research skills through service as research assistants or project officers.

3. The program provides excellent support by virtue of Indigenous Student Services and the facilities it offers students.

## Areas for Improvement

The review team had no major concerns but did identify some suggestions for alterations and a few observations of the program as a whole.

- The full-time faculty complement warrants enhancement in order to ensure that students doing an honours thesis receive proper support and also that input from the Indigenous standpoint is provided in the numerous governance forums discussing matters that potentially have ramifications for Indigenous students.
- There is a need to build greater recognition on the part of the ISP faculty members' home departments the breadth and types of activities that constitute Indigenous scholarship, more specifically that it is not limited to academic publications.
- Tenure and promotion criteria need to be made more flexible in order that the kinds of vital research in which ISP faculty engage are recognized.
- While the self-study indicates the Indigenous language resources that have been developed, it does not address the extent of the institutional commitment required if the program is to contribute substantively to the preservation and revitalization of the languages. It does recognize the role of Six Nations Polytechnic with respect to the languages offered there. The commitment required of the ISP is development of a cohesive set of curriculum resources that

give learners the solid foundation in the language(s) concerned that will allow them to continue building on their proficiency. This can be achieved only if full-time faculty complement includes members with the relevant expertise.

**Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations with the Department’s and Dean’s Responses**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Proposed Follow-Up</b>	<b>Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up</b>	<b>Timeline for Addressing Recommendation</b>
<p>More courses should be offered in order for students to have greater choice of upper-year electives. The program lists many courses but the number offered is limited.</p>	<p>Adding more faculty members to the Indigenous Studies Program will allow for this.</p>	<p>Director; Dean, Social Sciences</p>	<p>Long term goal</p>
<p>That the program examine the language component of its curriculum in order to determine its principal goal: to introduce cultural traditions, values, beliefs and customs, or to facilitate actual revitalization of the Indigenous languages the program offers.</p>	<p>Indigenous languages are in turmoil. Some languages in Canada now have fewer than 10 speakers who grew up with the language and many of these speakers are elderly. Because of this, most individuals that the Indigenous Studies Program have been able to hire are second language learners. In the future, we will look to hire a faculty member(s) with the relevant language expertise. In the short term, we will adjust the calendar to include a broader area of study to include language and culture.</p>	<p>Director</p>	<p>July 1, 2020</p>
<p>That hiring a mid-career tenured faculty member be strongly considered in order to ensure program delivery and to bridge the gap between the more junior and senior level career faculty members.</p>	<p>The Indigenous Studies Program and the Department of History hired a mid-career scholar July 1, 2018. A memo was drafted on March 1, 2019 to the Dean, Social Sciences outlining the urgency for a need for a second faculty hire. A job ad has been created and the Indigenous Studies</p>	<p>Director, Dean of Social Sciences</p>	<p>July 1, 2020</p>

	Program is in the process of recruiting an established scholar. The appointment will be joint between the Indigenous Studies Program and a relevant department. This position will help respond to our need for more mid-career tenured faculty members.		
That the university move to create a department of Indigenous Studies	The ISP has added a number of junior and senior faculty in the last couple of years with the intent to continue further hires. Additionally, a long term goal would be to move Indigenous Studies from a program to a department.	Director; Dean of Social Sciences	Long term goal
That the space for faculty offices in the L.R. Wilson Hall building area be increased.	Forward this recommendation to Senior Administration	Director; Dean of Social Sciences	Long term goal
That courses in years 2, 3, and 4 of the program be reviewed with the intention of adding relevant prerequisites so that students taking these courses are not burdened by others in the class who do not understand the basics of Indigenous studies.	We adjusted the cross list for this calendar year. The Arts & Science course, 1C03, was previously cross listed with 2MM3 (Research and Methods) and now with 1AA3 to ensure that those students are getting an introductory level understanding.	Director, Staff	July 1, 2019
Given the growth in the program, it is recommended that the ISP, once a department, look at developing a graduate level program.	Similar to recommendation 4, with the continued growth of the program which includes more faculty hires, the creation of a graduate program is an additional long term goal.	Director	Long term goal
That the program director be a tenured faculty member.	For a number of years, junior faculty have taken on a leadership role of the program. A tenured faculty	Director; Dean of Social Sciences	July 1, 2019

	<p>member would not face the added burden of having to juggle the governance responsibilities along with the research demands that are especially pressing for tenure-stream faculty members. As noted in recommendation #3, the Indigenous Studies Program is in the process of recruiting an established scholar which will add to our number of 5 tenured positions (these positions are cross appointed in Indigenous Studies and other disciplines). We are now better situated and have enough tenured faculty where this should no longer be an issue. These positions will help respond to our need for stability in the leadership of the program.</p>		
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**Dean’s Response, Faculty of Social Sciences:**

Overall, the review team provides a highly positive assessment of the program and particularly praised the commitment and scholarly records of our Indigenous faculty, the strong community orientation of the ISP, the integration of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and the space in Wilson Hall, and the services available to Indigenous students.

The review naturally also identified areas for improvement, and made a set of specific recommendations in this regard. The Program’s response outlines specific steps that it will take in response to these recommendations. Below I offer some comments on each of the major recommendations and on the program’s response to the recommendation.

**That more courses be offered in order that students have a greater choice of upper-year electives. The program lists many courses but the number offered is limited.**

This can be addressed in a few ways. One is recruitment of additional Indigenous faculty into the ISP. For instance, the ISP is recruiting a new faculty member (with rank open) this year with an expected start of July 1, 2020. A second is the recruitment of Indigenous faculty to other Faculties at McMaster as part of McMaster’s overall commitment to expand the complement of Indigenous faculty. Although much of their teaching will be in the specialized area associated with the Faculty/Department of appointment, in some cases an affiliation with the ISP would be of interest and they may be keen to deliver an upper-

year course suitable for the ISP. Finally, given the community focus of the ISP, in some cases it would be desirable for a knowledgeable Indigenous community member to present a course within the ISP (as already occurs). As Dean I am more than willing to work with the ISP to pursue all these strategies so as to strengthen the upper-year offerings within the program, which will only grow more important as enrolment expands.

**That the program examine the language component of its curriculum in order to determine its principal goal: to introduce cultural traditions, values, beliefs and customs, or to facilitate actual revitalization of the Indigenous languages the program offers.**

This recommendation implicitly includes two components. The first is to examine the curriculum to be clear about the goal of the language component of the ISP. This seems especially important given the close proximity of Six Nations Polytechnic and its language programs. The second is to design the curriculum (and ensure faculty resources) to achieve this goal. The two are linked: while one wants to be aspirational, it makes no sense to set a goal that is not achievable given the various constraints on the curriculum and resources. I, along with my Associate Dean-Academic, will work with the ISP faculty to support this examination and help ensure that the ISP's curriculum and resources are adequate to achieve the goal.

**That hiring a mid-career tenured faculty member be strongly considered in order to ensure program delivery and to bridge the gap between the more junior and senior level career faculty members.**

As the program response notes, the ISP recruited a new faculty member at the level of Associate Professor effective July 1, 2018, and the ISP program is undertaking a recruitment for an appointment at an open rank to start July 1, 2020. The intention is to hire at the level of Associate or Full Professor. The Indigenous scholars at McMaster are currently engaged in a strategic planning exercise that will include an analysis and recommendations regarding the complement of Indigenous faculty at McMaster. This planning exercise can consider this recommendation as part of its deliberations.

**That the university move to create a department of Indigenous Studies.**

Given the goals and interdisciplinary, inter-faculty nature of the ISP, creation of a Department of Indigenous Studies not surprisingly has advantages and disadvantages. These would have to be weighed carefully by the Program faculty in particular. Further, such a recommendation has to be placed in the broader university vision for Indigenous programming and activities, and any such decision would involve the Provost and other senior decision-makers. Again, it would appear appropriate that this recommendation be considered as part of the Indigenous strategic planning exercise currently underway.

**That the space for faculty offices in the L.R. Wilson Hall building area be increased.**

Space is at a premium within the Indigenous Centre, which houses both the ISP and the Indigenous Student Services (ISS). We have been looking this past year at how we can organize people and activities in a way that makes better use of the current space. Options are limited for expanding space contiguous to (or even near) their current location in Wilson Hall. The Faculty and the Assistant Vice-President Student Affairs will work with the ISP and the ISS to address space challenges for these units.

**That courses in years 2, 3 and 4 of the program be reviewed with the intention of adding relevant pre-requisites so that students taking these courses are not burdened by others in the class who do not understand the basics of Indigenous studies.**

This issue has been flagged by Indigenous students for the last few years as interest and enrolments in ISP courses have grown. The program has already made an adjustment to the curriculum that will help address this problem.

**Given the growth in the program, it is recommended that the ISP, once a department, look at developing a graduate level program.**

Creation of a department and creation of a graduate program raise different issues and challenges, and offer distinct advantages to students and Indigenous faculty. I would uncouple them: it is possible to create a graduate program without first becoming a department. Working with my Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, I would be happy work with Indigenous faculty to examine this recommendation. We have exceptional Indigenous scholars at McMaster and the desire to work with graduate students is understandable. Two things suggest that timing of any such expansion would be important. As emphasized by the review, faculty resources are already a challenge for delivering the undergraduate program alone. While further investment as described in this response can address this, one would want to ensure that creation of a graduate program would not over-burden Indigenous faculty or compromise the undergraduate program. Second, provincial funding for graduate students at McMaster is currently capped, so creation of a new graduate program would not attract associated new funding.

**That the program director be a tenured faculty member.**

With the relatively small complement of Indigenous faculty, the last few years have been particularly challenging for filling the Directorship due to the configuration of research leaves and other demands. The university has recently recruited a tenured Indigenous faculty member, the ISP is currently recruiting a new faculty member to an open-rank position with the intention to hire at the rank of Associate or Full Professor, and some current members will naturally progress to tenured status in the near future. The strengthening of the complement and career-stage of Indigenous faculty at McMaster should enable the appointment of tenured faculty members to the directorship in the future.

#### **Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation:**

**McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation and the committee recommends that the program should follow the regular course of action with a progress report and subsequent full external cyclical review to be conducted no later than 8 years after the start of the last review.**