

First Nations Studies Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Faculty of Social Science
Degrees Offered	B.A.
Modules Reviewed	Honors Specialization in First Nations Studies; Major in First Nations Studies
External Consultants	Chris Andersen, Dean, Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta; Jeff Orr, Dean, Faculty of Education, St. Francis Xavier University
InnEvaluation	Good Quality with Report in Two Years

Approval Dates	SUPR-U: June 10, 2019 SCAPA: September 11, 2019 Senate:
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1) *Reconciliation through investment in Indigenous people*: The reviewers note that one of the main elements that make Indigenous studies units distinctive is a fully functioning department. It is perhaps most distinguishable by the large proportion of Indigenous students within its ranks of majors. In turn, often the majority of registrants in IS courses are Indigenous students, which not only provides mutual support for them but raises the level of debate within the classrooms in productively complex ways. Creating and sustaining an investment in attracting and supporting Indigenous students and staff requires IS departments to be staffed with sufficient human resources.

2) *Valuing Indigenous Studies Knowledges, Worldviews and Ontologies*: The reviewers note that Universities are organized around epistemological perspectives and pillars, and departments house and lead significant disciplinary knowledge. In an Indigenous studies context in particular, any discussions of Indigenous studies as a discipline must acknowledge and theorize their central importance, because lacking an institutional presence "inhibits their ability to carry out their disciplinary vision and mission. Simply put, like all disciplines, programs such as Women's Studies and Indigenous Studies are emerging disciplines in their own right and as such are worthy of Departmental status. The commitment to invest in such programs by elevating them to departmental status sends an important message about the high value priority placed upon the knowledge that such disciplines hold and lead. Toward that end, departmental status offers vital positioning for Indigenous studies to create intellectual elbow room for themselves on campus;

2. The new Department of Indigenous Studies should engage an outside facilitator who has expertise in both strategic academic planning and Indigenous academic programming to co-develop a comprehensive academic plan alongside other Indigenous partners.
3. It is recommended that Western develop a strategic plan that invests substantially in one Indigenous language program (that the FNS program will possess a major role in the positioning of) through attention to succession and mentoring so that Western will be seen as the go-to lead institution for re-vitalization of this language.
4. It is recommended that, in addition to its attention to more typical forms of university assessment, that the FNS program seek, when possible, to include an array of partners –including, importantly, Indigenous partners –in discussions about the diversity of knowledge forms that they might deem beneficial.
5. It is recommended that the FNS program engage in intensive professional development facilitated by Indigenous studies scholars and other Indigenous knowledge holders who can assist them in identifying key approaches to teaching that benefit Indigenous organizations & communities and assist them in considering how these might be positioned as transformative experiences across the program.
6. It is recommended that the FNS program consider re-orienting the time focus of its chair towards at least one third of time commitment to engaging with Indigenous community partners and inter-university/polytechnic relations, or hire a part-time administrative liaison person accompanied by some minimum time commitment to this by the chair.
7. It is recommended that, in addition to its commitment to building a plan for investment in Indigenous language succession, that the FNS program, after developing its strategic academic

Implementation Plan