FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW

PROGRAM	SENATE APPROVAL DATE	PREPARED BY
School of Business	September 13, 2019	Provost and Vice-President

A. SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS & LISTING OF PROGRAMS UNDER REVIEW

SELF-STUDY REVIEW TIMELINE	DATE
1. Self-Study Presented to AQAPC	Nov. 15, 2018
2. Site Visit Conducted	Mar. 19-20, 2019
3. Reviewer's Report Received	Apr. 6, 2019
4. Internal Reviewers Response Received	Apr. 29, 2019
5. Dean's Response Received	Apr. 29, 2019

The members of the review committee were:
- Dr. Andrew Ackerman (Internal)
- Dr. Michael Henry, Thomson Rivers University (External)
- Dr. Davar Rezania, Guelph University (External)

The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:
- Bachelor of Business Administration
- Bachelor of Commerce

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 17, 2013.

B. PROGRAM STRENGTHS

External Reviewers:

1. The programs are supported by a strong full time, Ph.D. trained, faculty.
2. The School has successfully revised its programs and added a co-op option, increased choice for students and introduced post-baccalaureate diplomas. The revisions are forward looking.
3. The BBA provides all the necessary courses for graduating students to pursue their Accounting or Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation.
4. Courses are offered online and on campus.
5. Students report a high level of satisfaction with the program.

6. The faculty have been very effective in using innovative curriculum development and course delivery methodology, integrated experiential learning pedagory in their courses. This has resulted high levels of student engagement and satisfaction.

C. OPPORTUNTIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

External Reviewers Recommendation #1: *The reviewers observed a discrepancy between the written vision statement in the IQAP Self-study document (To deliver a student-centered business education and advance management knowledge) and the vision statement stated during the interviews (being among top 3 business school of similar size …). Improving the administrative processes and the internal communication within the school should help develop a shared understanding of the school's vision.*

Unit's Response: Thank you for raising this issue. The Schools vision remains the same as stated in IQAP self-study document. We agree that we do not have a common understanding of a different vision other than the vision noted in the self-study documents. Your recommendation will prompt us to revisit our school's objectives in the future. Being in the top 3 amongst similar schools is not an established goal at this point.

Dean's Response: It is my understanding that there was confusion about the vision of the school in a discussion with faculty. This is the first I have heard about the School wanting to be in a ranking of the top 3 business schools of similar size. It may be a very good objective to set but such an objective would need to be more clearly defined by the School (e.g. on what basis? How is size defined?). It is also my understanding that the School will take this feedback as a prompt to reconsider their objectives in strategic planning.

Provost's Response: Clearly the Director and the Unit must agree on the vision statement for the School. This statement should take into consideration the context of NU and its financial, demographic and other realities, as well as directions committed to in strategic and academic planning.

External Reviewers Recommendation #2: *The school would benefit from reflecting on how program decisions are aligned with the university's planning and current realities and particularly on the opportunities for the school to engage with other academic units in interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary projects or programs.*

Unit's Response: Thank you for your recommendation. We acknowledge that there is a gap between what the University wants to do and what the School of Business wants to do. We are looking forward to revising our strategies once we receive clear direction in terms of planning from administration (VPAR). However, we have removed prerequisites from some courses to encourage cross-disciplinary and inter disciplinary avenues for students. The new programs (BBA, BComm and post- Baccalaureate) approved are a move in the direction of cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs. Our iLEAD expedition projects are open to students from other Schools.

Dean's Response: I agree that the School of Business could do a better job of developing curriculum with other departments in the University. The School recently underwent a program revision process for its BBA degree so the foundation is now set to look at other opportunities. In addition, the new faculty structure under new leadership might help to create new opportunities for the School. However, I do think it is important to acknowledge that collaboration does occur on a limited scale in the revised BBA curriculum and some faculty members participate in the graduate programs of other departments.

Provost's Response: Identifying synergies with other departments, and building programmes drawing on broader strengths of NU should be a curricula priority of the School.

External Reviewers Recommendation #3: *Rather than basing academic planning and processes on historical precedents, a better approach might be to benchmark against other, similar Schools.*

Unit's Response: Thank you for the recommendation and we agree. We will undertake actions to acquire benchmark data from other universities to inform our strategic planning. We will clarify who our main comparators are as part of the process of revisiting our vision.

Dean's Response: This recommendation represents a good practice. It is my understanding that the School agrees with the approach and will build this into future strategic planning.

Provost's Response: Agree with the Dean.

External Reviewers Recommendation #4: *An examination of the processes within the School would help to identify deficiencies. The School should stablish a curriculum committee to review changes to the curriculum. Currently the learning outcomes are established for the programs. The committee should establish learning outcomes for each stream where appropriate. The committee should examine the learning outcomes and establish where in the curriculum assurance of learning assessments are conducted for each program and the associated streams.*

Unit's Response: A very helpful recommendation and we agree. We have a committee for this purpose, Teaching and Student Experience (TSE) committee. Curriculum Review is part of TSE committee's mandate. TSE committee reviewed all curriculum changes during the program revision. We acknowledge your observation that ensure that this committee reviews all curriculum changes and conduct assurance of learning assessments for programs and streams.

Dean's Response: The School does have a Teaching and Student Experience Committee with the explicit purpose "to provide a consultative forum for the review and discussion of matters related to curriculum, teaching, learning, and student experience in the SB" (Terms of Reference). Indeed, it was this Committee that started the curriculum revisions and reviewed drafts prior to the proposals going to the School for final approval. However, there is more work to do as the reviewers pointed out in their recommendation. I agree with the reviewers that learning outcomes should be established for each area of concentration and a plan should be developed for assurance of learning. The Teaching and Student Experience Committee would be the appropriate group to do this work.

Provost's Response: I would like to see the School actively engage in identifying and further developing the learning outcomes, including discussion on how they are are assessed and which pedagogues should be used.

External Reviewers Recommendation #5: *The programs of studies for the revised BComm and BBA seems similar and students can transfer between the programs. The School should examine the need to maintain both programs.*

Unit's Response: We acknowledge our previous BBA and BComm are very similar. The revised BBA and BComm programs are different. We offer cohort learning experiences for high school graduates in the new BBA and there is a smaller core for the BComm program. We will continue to discuss possibilities for unique elements to add to the BComm program Two programs for two different target markets.

Dean's Response: There are a few recommendations from the reviewers that may have resulted from confusion with the recent revision to the business curriculum which was not reflected in the self-study document. In the past, there was certainly a concern that the two degrees were similar with the difference only being the number of years of study. However, the BBA revision process was intended to clearly position the BBA as a degree for high school graduates at the North Bay campus. Therefore, the revised BBA program contains some unique program elements with this particular group in mind – i.e. a first year integrated business study term, workshops for academic success and career management, and practicums (co-op option, management consulting course) as well as a selection of concentration areas. While the program revision process involved the introduction of a 4 year option in the BComm, that was done to enable the positioning of the BComm degree to meet the needs of our distance and college partnership students who increasingly want a 4 year business degree. The BComm degree is a more flexible degree program than the BBA in structure with a smaller core curriculum and different in delivery modes (i.e. online and blended delivery) to meet the unique needs of college graduates and working professionals. However, I do agree that more work needs to be

done to develop some signature curricular elements that meet the needs of this intended BComm audience and it is my understanding that the School if currently developing a proposal.

Provost's Response: I agree with Dean.

External Reviewers Recommendation #6: *An enrolment management system should be designed to prevent very small classes being offered.*

Unit's Response: Thank you for this suggestion. As per Faculty of Applied Professional Studies policy, normally we do not offer a course unless there are at least 10 students. Sometimes we are compelled to offer courses due to our obligation to students, to enable them to graduate in their streams. We pride ourselves on small class sizes and we promise this to our students. We agree the university should put in an enrollment management system. We will look at how we can improve our enrollment management system.

Dean's Response: At Nipissing University, we proudly recruit students based on small class sizes and we have largely been able to deliver this in the School of Business with a North Bay average class size on par with the University average. Our distance and college partnership course sections are already closely managed to maintain a good experience for students while being financially prudent. Of course, excess capacity does exist at the higher level courses at the North Bay campus where higher enrollments could easily be accommodated. However, an information system to aid course planning would be helpful especially to help plan cycling of the higher level courses in North Bay. There is a dashboard system being developed currently and this may be helpful to addressing this concern.

Provost's Response: Small classrooms have their place as an explicitly considered pedagogical mechanism. However, small classrooms in undergraduate education can also be an highly intimidating learning environment and not appropriate. Further, rhetoric around small classrooms which have resulted from declining enrollments have led to some serious workload inequities among faculty at NU. The Registrar is leading a SEM planning exercise and it is vital that the School engage in enrollment planning as part of its annual academic planning exercise which then is also connected to the SEM.

External Reviewers Recommendation #7: *An examination of academic advising within the school would help to identify deficiencies. In the interviews, students had concerns about the quality and timeliness of academic advising provided by university central services. Related to the last point, the School needs to examine how academic advising for the newly approved cooperative education options can be organized, including a hybrid model with general advising centralized and program specific advising (senior years, majors, coop) offered within the school.*

Unit's Response: Thank you for this recommendation. We totally agree with you. We need to hire a staff member to coordinate Co-op, experiential learning, and academic advising. We will project this request to Dean and administration, for providing one staff position for supporting Co-op, experiential Learning and Advising.

Dean's Response: Academic Advising is a centralized service at Nipissing University and, I believe, it is currently operating with fewer Advisors than they would like. However, the reviewers do raise an important point that some advising will be needed within the School particularly related to the new co-op option. This is likely a function that can be provided as part of a co-op placement officer's work where students will need some support to plan their placement around School of Business offerings.

Provost's Response: While academic advising focused on degree achievements is a central function of the University led by a team of advisors under the Registrar's Office, the faculty and the School has an important role to play in advising students on pathways in their field of study. It is the School's responsibility to make explicit to students how faculty is available for such advising through posting of their office hours, including information in course outlines etc.

External Reviewers Recommendation #8: *The introduction of the coop option is a positive addition. For successful implementation the school should clearly identify responsibilities for employer liaison, student preparation and coop processes and ensure sufficient resources are allocated. The school should examine how existing university services can be accessed to support this initiative.*

Unit's Response: Thank you for this recommendation. We totally agree with you. We need to hire a staff member to coordinate Co-op, experiential learning, and academic advising. We will project this request to Dean and administration, for providing one staff position for supporting Co-op, experiential Learning and Advising.

Dean's Response: The BBA program revision proposal included the addition of a placement officer to support the development of the co-op option. I believe that this will be a key position to growing enrollment in the BBA program and developing an employer base while connecting with other departments in the University to leverage their services.

Provost's Response: NU will be assessing the need and use of placement officers institution wide. We also need to be mindful of the use of "co-op" in contexts in which it is used to refer to experiential learning such as iLead (which is not a co-op) as opposed to work integrated learning opportunities. Development of an actual co-op programme at NU would be very positive.

External Reviewers Recommendation #9: *An assessment of how tasks that support the delivery of programs within the School are allocated among faculty and staff should be conducted. For example, each course needs to have a formal course lead who would be responsible for ensuring quality assurance for the course.*

Unit's Response: We agree that having a course lead is important, however, we do not have the resources to do this. At present, we have course leads for very few courses. If the university would be able to put forth the resources to support this, then we think it would be beneficial.

Dean's Response: The reviewers have raised a very good idea to help ensure a consistent learning experience and assurance of quality across sections of each course. Course leads have been successfully deployed at other business schools to accomplish this. The School has also replicated this to some extent (e.g. quantitative courses online) but this represents a significant amount of work for a small contingent of faculty. I believe that the School recognizes the value of this approach and I hope it can be revisited with the addition of new faculty positions. There may also be other tasks supporting the programs that require examination and the School can consider these as part of its strategic planning process.

Provost's Response: I strongly disagree with the internal response and urge the Director to prioritize this recommendation by the external review. This is an excellent mechanism contributing to ensuring quality across multiple sections of a course.

External Reviewers Recommendation #10: *A task and job analysis of staff functions would help to determine if there is currently adequate staffing to ensure all necessary tasks can be handled in an efficient manner.*

Unit's Response: Thank you for this recommendation. We agree. The staff in the School are already overloaded. New program implementation will add to the heavy workload. We have been requesting for additional staff. We will once again make a request for additional staff.

Dean's Response: We do have job descriptions for staff positions in the School of Business which clearly outlines tasks related to the positions. However, the addition of the co-op option creates the need for a placement officer which forces the reassessment of current positions and how work of the School is distributed among them. Therefore, this can be done as the placement officer position is created, It is worth highlighting that the School remains under-

resourced with the loss of the APS Manager of Partnerships position and the BComm Clerk position not being replaced during a leave.

Provost's Response: The School has in fact better staff resources than most other academic units considering both faculty complement and student numbers. More efficient division of tasks would be a desirable outcome of the suggested assessment.

External Reviewers Recommendation #11: *It is advisable to develop a HR plan for the faculty. With a large number of streams being offered, the school should consider recruiting generalist faculty rather that specialists. The possibility of hiring teaching focused faculty should also be examined. Models for engagement of teaching faculty are found in teaching universities (Capilano U, University of the Fraser Valley) as well as in U-15 research intensive universities (University of British Columbia, University of Toronto).*

Unit's Response: We agree with the recommendation that we should have a HR plan that is agreed upon by the School of Business and the University administration. We have developed an HR plan. However, the university has not followed this. We agree that we should have specialists and generalists. We agree with having teaching faculty, but there would need to be a change to collective agreement between University and NUFA.

Dean's Response: There was a HR plan for the School but it should be updated to reflect the revised program and current course offerings. The idea of hiring some generalist faculty members with an emphasis on teaching and engagement with industry is intriguing. We currently have a collective agreement which restricts this type of faculty from being hired particularly when considering the tenure and promotion process where a lecturer type faculty member would struggle to progress through the ranks. It is my understanding that the School is supportive of having some faculty members who would focus on teaching and connecting to industry. Therefore, it is something that I would encourage the University community to consider in support of its professional programs.

Provost's Response: I support the external review recommendation.

External Reviewers Recommendation #12: *The School should examine the alignment of its programming with the NU's focus on literacy. The curriculum should be reviewed to examine if sufficient liberal arts options are available to the students. Reducing the number of specialization and broadening the literacy component of the curriculum should be considered.*

Unit's Response: Thank you for this recommendation. Our students have the option to minor in other subjects. We welcome broadening our program to other areas of the university. However, we want to maintain our business core courses to maintain our perception as a reputable business school amongst prospective students and industry representatives. Business students have the option to complete half of the degree to be completed outside of business providing students with lots of flexibility. However, most students take elective courses in business because that is what they are interested in. We have breadth requirements for business students, which include sciences and humanities.

Dean's Response: As previously mentioned, the School recently worked through a revision of its programs. While there is still work to do, particular attention was paid to the inclusion of Arts and Science courses in the curriculum. Specifically, the revised BBA curriculum retains a breadth requirement that mandates that students take 6 credits of Arts and Science credits. Additional courses were built in as concentration area electives as appropriate. Further, the core requirements represent only about half the credits for the 120 credit degree program. Therefore, there is ample opportunity for students to take non-business courses as part of their degree through the minor structure of other departments.

However, I do think there are opportunities to develop programmatic collaborations with other departments where literacy can play a larger role in the structure along with financial literacy. The School should actively explore these opportunities for collaboration**.**

Provost's Response: I strongly agree with this recommendation. Ideally the core degree programmes should be supported by micro-credentialing in some key areas and a much stronger connection to strengths in the Faculty of Arts and Science, opening up opportunities for the students to engage with inherent interests.

D.   IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Below are the recommendations that require specific action as a result of the Review, along with the identification of the position or unit responsible for the action in question. Notwithstanding the position or unit identified as the being responsible for specific recommendations, the Dean of the Faculty has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	PROJECTED COMPLETION
#1 - Develop a new School vision statement	Director with School	January 2020
#2, 12 - Map potential connections to other departments for curricula development	Director with School	Academic Planning 2020-2021
#3 - Develop a benchmarking document	Director with School	May 2020
#4, 5 - Develop a learning outcomes document to distinguish programmes/streams	Director with School	May 2020
#6 - Contribute to institutional SEM planning	Director with Registrar	Fall 2019
#7 - Develop a communication plan on student advising by the School	Director with School	January 2020
#8 - Map experiential learning opportunities within the School	Director with School	March 2020
#9 - Establish faculty course lead for each course	Director	December 2019
#10 - Carry out a task analysis within the School with the goal of identifying shared resources and efficiencies	Director	March 2020
#11 - As part of the academic plan, propose a forward looking strategy for faculty renewal	Director with School	Academic Planning 2020-2021