

ACADEMIC PLAN UPDATE
Faculty of Arts and Social Science
Huron University College
2014-2016
Approved by FASS Committee 6 May 2014

Context

This document represents goals and tactics as adjusted from the FASS Academic Plan 2010-2015 [appended], focussing on items to be pursued in the next two years. It was developed on the basis of a series of four open sessions hosted in fall 2013. Two of these sessions focussed on reviewing (for wear) the current plan after three years of its existence, and two focussed on seeing how FASS might “operationalize” the directions and imperatives of Huron’s Statement of strategic direction, *Critically Engaged*. The document was also informed by discussion at a meeting of the entire faculty in November 2013.

Competencies for Graduates

FASS’s approach to undergraduate education shares objectives and principles with what has traditionally been described as “a liberal arts education.” Our emphasis is on what the traditional liberal arts curriculum has been meant to enable and deliver, rather than on contents and ideological complements that it has accrued over time. In this way, it is distinguished from “great books” and “Western Civilizations” approaches. Our approach is built on providing our graduates with opportunities to develop competencies in the following areas that will prepare them to be resourceful, adaptable, compassionate, informed, generous members and leaders of their communities, prepared to see issues from a multiplicity of perspectives and to exercise careful judgement in decision-making:

Critical Thinking;

Creative Thinking and the ability to use metaphor and models;

Engagement, Responsibility, and Accountability;

Global Awareness;

Contextualized Knowledge.

In addition, and as an integral part of acquiring and practising these competencies, our graduates will be effective communicators.

Following is a list of areas for strategic attention between 2014 and 2016, and a listing of persons and committees charged with developing specific initiatives. In some cases, the initiatives are defined and in others the committee is charged with developing them.

1. In support of Critical Thinking;

1.1 Increase opportunities for reflections on learning process by students [cf. Directions 4 and 5, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility for developing initiatives: Teaching and Learning Committee

1.2 Increase opportunities for intentional addressing of problem-solving in course activities [cf. Direction 3, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility for developing initiatives: Departments and Programs, reporting to Educational Policy Committee

1.3 Explore possibilities for support of critical thinking through proposed Learning Commons.

Responsibility for developing initiatives: Dean, Educational Policy Committee, Director of Library and Information Services, Director of Writing Services

2. In support of Creative Thinking and the ability to use metaphor and models;

2.1 Establish Undergraduate Research-Learning Centre

Responsibility for developing initiatives: Dean and steering committee (to be formed) [with or without external funding aid]

2.2 Explore possibilities for support of creative thinking through proposed Learning Commons.

Responsibility for developing initiatives: Dean, Educational Policy Committee, Director of Library and Information Services

3. In support of Engagement, Responsibility, and Accountability;

3.1 Find ways of underscoring statements of learning objectives listed on course outlines; making them 'live';[cf. Direction 5, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility for developing initiatives: Teaching and Learning Committee, Departments/Programs

3.2 Continue to develop First-year experience [cf. Directions 21 and 23, 2010-2015 plan] by:

Implementing an Annual Spring meeting of first-year instructors beginning 2015;

Using Writing Proficiency Assessment results to guide instructor-student

work on writing;

Developing a Huron discourse on first principles for first year; areas for consideration might include enrolment mixes, delivery, common learning objectives, including information literacy standards, required supports, means of introducing students to university's culture, common texts and/or issues, foundational courses, extra-curricular programming to support first-year students.

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee, working with Retention Committee and Student Life Committee, and Teaching and Learning Committee, Director of Writing Services.

3.3 Enhance and increase Experiential Learning Opportunities [cf. Direction 8, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility for developing initiatives: Educational Policy Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, working with Academic Council Committee on Experiential Learning

3.4 Support of research and research-learning [cf. Direction 2, 2010-15 Plan] through Establishment of Undergraduate Research-Learning Centre at Huron

Responsibility: Dean and steering committee (to be formed) [with or without external funding aid]

3.5 Pilot project: advertize and fill position of part-time curriculum and research development officer

Responsibility: Dean

4. In support of Global Awareness;

4.1 Develop a common understanding throughout Huron of critical engagement in global and international contexts

Responsibility: Dean, Global Activities Committee, working with Huron Leadership Team, Huron Centre for Current and Future Students &c.

4.2 Identify current courses that foreground global content and cross-cultural sensitivity, and identify additional opportunities by module. [cf. Direction 9, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility: Global Activities Committee

5. In support of Contextualized Knowledge.

5.1 Continue to develop trans-disciplinary programming [cf. Directions 15 and 17, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility: Departments and Programs and Educational Policy Committee

5.2 Explore development of a Centre for Urban and Community Studies that would oversee a number of new Minors

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee, Departments and Programs, working with Experiential Learning Committee of Academic Council

5.3 Study opportunities for common courses or course components [Directions 15 and 16, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee to receive and act on report of Working Group on Common Courses. The working group was commissioned to review and identify courses that can serve multiple programs, and review module structures in all programs and look for opportunities for more interdisciplinary flexibility (eg. allowing course[s] from one area for credit on another module)

5.4 Develop messaging around inter- and trans-disciplinary programs

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee to liaise with recruitment strategy committee; recommendations to registrar

5.5 Develop further combined BA/HBA degree programs with Ivey Business School.

Responsibility: Departments and Programs, and Educational Policy Committee.

6. General Initiatives

6.1 Review of program requirements to ensure that students have adequate breadth of opportunities to develop the competencies for graduates, including review of existing statements of program learning objectives (2010) and revision where necessary, and noting gaps and complementarities to be addressed.

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee

6.2 Review and recommend on departmental processes and governance, including:

a.) periodicity of department meetings;

b.) lists of responsibilities for departments/program units that should be regular business at department/unit meetings (eg. regarding students [attraction, retention, advising, acculturation, communication], courses [old, new, array &c], programs [ditto], colleagues [community, mentoring, supports needed, &c], &c);

c.) finalizing “Duties of Chairs/Directors/Coordinators” document, and taking to FASS for approval;

d.) establishing a culture of referrals by EPC to departments and programs, and of submissions from departments and programs to EPC (advice back and forth; generation of ideas and initiatives).

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee and Committee of Chairs

[Note: this is a revision of the impulse of Appendix 5 of the 2010-15 Plan.]

6.3 Determine responsibilities for program advising, working together to develop expertise on key aspects of academic calendar regulations;

[cf. Direction 13, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility: Part of a larger discussion including Retention Committee, Academic Counsellors, Executive Director, Student Engagement, and part of review of Duties of Chairs &c

6.4 Establish some paradigms for progression through modules [cf. Direction 22, 2010-15 Plan]

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee

6.5 Enhance and develop a supportive co-curricular environment that affords opportunities outside of the classroom to develop critical and creative thinking skills, and global awareness.

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee, to liaise with Student Life Committee

6.6 While underlining that carefully designed assignments geared to articulated learning objectives are constantly measuring achievement of those objectives, explore the idea of adopting an existing instrument, or of developing our own “exit/demonstration exercise”

Responsibility: Educational Policy Committee working with Academic Council Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Writing Proficiency Assessment and with the Director, Library and Information Services and the Learning Commons initiative.

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