

**TO:** Mike Mahon  
President and Vice Chancellor

**DATE:** December 11, 2013

**FROM:** Robert A. Boudreau  
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

**RE:** Bachelor of Management – First Nations Governance, Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Bachelor of Management - First Nations Governance at its November 15, 2013 meeting.

The Program Review Committee for this review was comprised of Andrea Amelinckx (Program Review Coordinator), Yale Belanger, Jim Clark, and John Usher. The review produced four documents:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Quality Assurance, Area: First Nations Governance* (received May 13, 2013) – Self Study Report, developed by the B.Mgt. First Nations Governance Self Study Committee.
2. *Report of the Review Committee for the Bachelor of Management in First Nations Governance, University of Lethbridge* (received August 12, 2013) – External Review Report by David Newhouse (Trent University) and Wanda Wuttunee (University of Manitoba), based on their site visit of June 24-25, 2013.
3. *First Nations Governance Major, Quality Assurance Review: Response to External Reviewers' Recommendations* (received September 27, 2013) – response of the Self Study Committee to the external review.
4. *Quality Assurance, Faculty of Management, First Nations Governance Major, Response of the Dean, November 7, 2013* (received November 7, 2013) – response to the review, written by Robert Ellis, Dean of the Faculty of Management.

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<sup>1</sup> All documents are available upon request.

## **Self Study**

The Self Study Report listed the major challenges for First Nations Governance (FNG):

- Limited enrolments.
- How to increase student interest in the major, minor, and certificate programs.

The following concerns were listed in the report:

- There are tensions between: (1) strong management foundation and FNMI-focused courses; (2) depth vs. breadth in FNG courses; (3) the number of elective courses and the available instructors; and (4) enrolment and applicant pool quality.
- Difficulty in hiring academically-qualified instructors and tenure track faculty.
- The need to ensure that the Native American Studies (NAS) Department (in the Faculty of Arts and Science) and the FNG Area have an adequate base of tenure-track faculty.
- Optimal course sequencing.
- Optimal class size and resourcing.
- What is the best way to advance faculty research and teaching?
- Are the FNG concentrations appropriate? Consider renaming, changing, or creating new concentrations.
- There are no tenured or tenure-track faculty in the FNG Area. The program relies on sessional lecturers to handle FNG courses.

The Self Study Report summarized the strengths of FNG:

- This is one of the few programs of its type in Canada that integrates with a Native American Studies department and has a special focus on governance and management. It is the only program of its type in Canada that requires at least one Aboriginal language course.
- The program is unique in Alberta. Other related programs in the province are bachelor's degrees in business or commerce. Moreover, class sizes are smaller in FNG.
- The program provides a unique blend of study in First Nations governance and core business concepts, which prepares graduates to assume leadership roles in their communities.
- Courses are taught by highly respected professionals and scholars.
- There are a variety of learning opportunities, including Elders workshops, the Scotiabank-funded Mentors Program, and Native Awareness Week.
- Students can access free tutorial support, scholarships and other financial support, Elders on campus weekly, a laptop lending program, mentorship, peer support, and social activities.
- Practitioners, Elders, and other guest speakers are invited into FNG classes.

Several future directions were noted in the report:

- Augment retention programs to boost student retention. To assist in student recruitment, build closer ties to Aboriginal colleges and to non-Aboriginal colleges that have a sizeable Aboriginal student body.
- Establish an Indigenous international exchange program that exposes students to other Aboriginal communities and universities.
- Develop FNMI-specific co-op opportunities, on and off reserve.
- Develop more internship training options.
- Work with the NAS Department and the Native American Student Association to boost cross-disciplinary learning opportunities. Possible examples include more Elders workshops, mentorship luncheons, and more speaker events.
- Evaluate the existing concentrations and revise them or create new concentrations, as needed.
- Consider collaborative programming with college partners.

### ***External Review***

In their External Review Report, professors Newhouse and Wuttunee commended the U of L “for its three decade long commitment and contribution to the education and training necessary to advance self-governance and self-determination within Aboriginal communities.” The report made the following general observations about the FNG area:

- Though FNG has made significant contributions to research and teaching in Aboriginal governance, these contributions have declined recently, and the viability of the program is currently in doubt. Faculty members who led early contributions in research and curriculum have left the program.
- FNG does have “excellent student support services, administrative support and well-regarded instructors.”
- FNG’s partnership with the Department of Native American Studies makes the FNG program unique and gives students an “excellent academic experience.”
- There is a sizeable potential demand for the FNG program, due to the large number of Aboriginal organizations and businesses.
- There are no tenured or tenure track faculty in the FNG area.
- Through the First Nations Transition Program, the Library has developed an excellent course on information literacy, which is currently underused by FNG students.

The External Review Report made 14 main recommendations for improving the FNG area:

1. Establish an advisory committee of FNMI community leaders and faculty member, co-chaired by the Dean of Management and a community member. Task this committee to develop a FNG vision, mission, and strategic plan. This advisory committee should also be involved in reviewing curriculum [#2] developing the hiring plan [#10] and the student recruitment and retention plan [#13].
2. Review the FNG curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of local FNMI organizations. Involve the FNG advisory committee in this review.
3. Review the FNG theme areas in light of local needs. Consider the viability of the “history and politics” theme area given its low enrolment.
4. Review the program structure of three overlapping sub-themes to reduce unnecessary complexity.
5. Consider alternative ways to meet the program’s language course requirements.
6. Develop courses that focus on urban environments, or include issues on urban environments in existing courses.
7. Consider delivering some FNG courses on the Calgary and Edmonton campuses.
8. Consider including in the curriculum leadership and organizational theories from particular FNMI cultural heritages, especially Blackfoot and Cree.
9. Continue to nurture partnerships with Cape Breton University, UBC, and New Mexico State University.
10. Develop a ten-year plan for faculty hiring.
11. Consider working on a plan to develop existing Management faculty in FNG issues.
12. Consider developing cohorts within FNG to help students develop networks.
13. Develop a five-year plan for student recruitment and retention.
14. Develop a promotional campaign that emphasizes the unique knowledge and skills of a FNG graduate.

Three additional recommendations can be extracted from the report:

- Develop a plan to incorporate FNMI elements in Management courses.
- Develop alumni profiles that describe the work they are doing and how the FNG program prepared them for that work.
- Consider changing the name of the area, to one that appeals to urban and Métis communities.

## ***Program Response***

In its Program Response, the Self Study Committee stated that it agrees with the 14 recommendations from the External Review Report.

The Self Study Committee also noted the following additional recommendations:

- Work more closely with FNMI alumni. In this regard, it would help to develop online alumni profiles.
- Create a faculty complement of at least three in FNG, by hiring an additional tenure track faculty member and/or recruiting existing faculty members.
- Encourage non-Aboriginal and international students to take FNG courses, and incorporate FNMI elements broadly in Management courses.

According to the Program Response, in Fall 2013 the FNG area will prioritize objectives resulting from the quality assurance review, and will establish an advisory committee that will begin a curriculum review in 2014.

## ***Dean's Response***

In his response, Dean of Management Robert Ellis praised the review's "valuable insights" and summarized the major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the First Nations Governance area:

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<b>Strengths:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The focus on building capacity for FNMI peoples and communities is unique among business and management schools in Canada.</li><li>2. It is an effective collaboration between Native American Studies and the Faculty of Management, resulting in a unique blend of courses that provides an excellent foundation of theory and practice.</li><li>3. Strong financial support from the business community.</li><li>4. Effective academic advising that is valued by students.</li><li>5. Very high levels of student satisfaction.</li><li>6. In its required subjects the B.Mgt. program includes introduction to management, international management, and operations management, and emphasizes ethics and social responsibility.</li><li>7. Facilities are of a very high standard.</li><li>8. Programs for working adults are offered on the Edmonton and Calgary campuses.</li></ol>
<b>Weaknesses:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enrolment has remained static and only a small number have graduated from the FNG major.</li><li>2. The number of faculty members has declined.</li><li>3. The program name and curriculum may not reflect the changing demographics of FNMI peoples.</li><li>4. There is a lack of tenure-track faculty members to support the program and a heavy reliance on sessional instructors.</li><li>5. Isolation and separation from their communities is a major cause of student attrition.</li></ol>

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<b>Opportunities:</b>	1. Identify ways to recruit students more effectively and ensure that more students graduate. 2. Graduate programming.
<b>Threats:</b>	1. Increasing competition from postsecondary institutions that have been given degree granting status.

The Dean's Response offered some further commentary on recommendations from the External Review Report:

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Commentary:</b>
1. Establish an advisory committee of FNMI community leaders and faculty members, co-chaired by the Dean of Management and a community member. Task this committee to develop a FNG vision, mission, and strategic plan.	With the launch of a new Strategic Plan for 2014-20, this is an ideal time for an FNMI Advisory Committee to develop strategic goals.
2. Review the FNG curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of local FNMI organizations. Involve the FNG advisory committee in this review.	This is an excellent suggestion to ensure the curriculum stays relevant to FNMI communities.
3. Review the FNG theme areas in light of local needs. Consider the viability of the "history and politics" theme area given its low enrolment.	This will be referred to the FNMI Advisory Committee for its consideration and recommendation.
4. Review the program structure of three overlapping sub-themes to reduce unnecessary complexity.	This will be referred to the FNMI Advisory Committee for its consideration and recommendation.
5. Consider alternative ways to meet the program's language course requirements.	This will be referred to the FNMI Advisory Committee for its consideration and recommendation.
6. Develop courses that focus on urban environments, or include issues on urban environments in existing courses.	The FNMI Advisory Committee can guide the development of courses for urban FNMI peoples.
8. Consider including in the curriculum leadership and organizational theories from particular FNMI cultural heritages, especially Blackfoot and Cree.	We must build an academic culture of scholars interested in Aboriginal leadership.

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Commentary:</b>
9. Continue to nurture partnerships with Cape Breton University, UBC, and New Mexico State University.	FNG will continue to build partnerships with other universities. Two particular initiatives will be: a post-diploma transfer agreement with Yukon College for its Aboriginal programs; and a partnership with the Ch'nook initiative of UBC's Sauder School of Business.
10. Develop a ten-year plan for faculty hiring.	It is unlikely the U of L will find the funds to support this. But there is an opportunity to work with business, government, and FNMI organizations on a major new FNMI management education initiative.
11. Consider working on a plan to develop existing Management faculty in FNG issues.	Where possible, the Dean will support an FNMI faculty member in pursuing a Ph.D.
12. Consider developing cohorts within FNG to help students develop networks.	Developing partnerships with FNMI organizations and communities is the best way to develop student cohorts.
13. Develop a five-year plan for student recruitment and retention.	The FNMI Advisory Committee will consider this suggestion. This could also be part of a broad FNMI student recruitment and retention initiative led by the Strategic Enrolment Management Committee.
14. Develop a promotional campaign that emphasizes the unique knowledge and skills of a FNG graduate.	Testimonials from alumni and employers can be featured on the Faculty of Management website.

The Dean's Response noted two further initiatives that aim to position the U of L as a leader in management education for FNMI peoples:

- The Faculty of Management hopes to make support for FNMI peoples a pillar of an upcoming capital campaign.
- Management will continue in its discussions to create a Centre of Aboriginal Economic Development and a Chair in Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Leadership.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the B.Mgt. – First Nations Governance academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L’s academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:

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Robert A. Boudreau

Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

Cc: Andrew Hakin, Provost and Vice President (Academic)