

TO: Mike Mahon
President and Vice Chancellor

DATE: December 8, 2016

FROM: Alan Siaroff
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

RE: Theory Into Practice Programs 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 Theory Into Practice Programs at its November 24, 2016 meeting.

The Self Study Committee for this review comprised Dan Kazakoff and Steve Craig (Program Review Coordinators), Gord Hunter, and Jim Clark.

The review produced four documents:¹

1. *Area: Theory Into Practice Programs, Faculty of Management, Academic Quality Assurance Review, Self-Study Report, February 26, 2016* (received February 29, 2016) – Self Study Report, developed by the Theory Into Practice Programs Self Study Committee.
2. *Theory Into Practice ‘Program’s’ Quality Assurance: External Examiners’ Report* (received May 3, 2016) – by Andrew Gaudes (University of Regina) and Charles Belanger (Laurentian University) based on their site visit of April 12-13, 2016.
3. *Faculty of Management Theory Into Practice (TIP) Programs Quality Assurance Review: Response to External Examiners’ Report* (received May 16, 2016) – response of the Self Study Committee to the external review.
4. *Dean’s Response - from Bob Boudreau, November 8 2016* (received November 9, 2016) – response to the review, written by Robert Boudreau, Dean of the Faculty of Management.

¹ All documents are available upon request.

Self Study

The Self Study Report noted the uniqueness of this QA review, given that the Theory Into Practice (TIP) programs are wide in scope, some for credit and some not, and none lead directly to a major or degree.

The report included a summary of results:

- TIP programs connect the Faculty of Management and its students with the surrounding community.
- Students in TIP programs tend to be high achievers.
- TIP programs are spread across the Faculty of Management, with no one unit or person ultimately responsible for them.
- TIP program offerings have high rates of participant satisfaction.
- When responsibility for TIP programs moved away from the initial directors of these programs there was a decline in the number of offerings and participation.
- More TIP-like activities (like guest lectures, projects, and live cases) are being used in regular classes and other areas of the University.

The Self Study contained a planning summary:

- Implement the Orbis co-op database to reduce administrative workload and shift resources to student services.
- Investigate the re-establishment of the MENTORS program by assessing resources needed and student interest.
- Assess the possibility of having semester-long co-op placements that coincide with the proposed Global Leadership Opportunity Program.
- Continue to diversify co-op offerings.
- Continue to expand the quantity and diversity of student Professional Development Program opportunities.
- Increase student awareness of, and involvement in, case competitions.
- Formalize and continue the International Management Event, which highlights successful global professionals.

The report listed an agenda of concerns:

- How can all the initiatives under the TIP banner be structured as a whole?
- Should more faculty resources be directed to TIP?
- How do we ensure equality of opportunity regarding TIP for students on the Calgary campus?
- The U of L definition of a “program” does not fit TIP programs.
- “Experiential learning” may be a better descriptor than “Theory into Practice.”

External Review

The External Review Report noted that TIP offerings are at the core of the mandate of the U of L and the Faculty of Management, discussed the strengths and weaknesses of TIP programs, and included recommendations for improvement:

Strengths:

- Staff involved in TIP offerings are committed to the program and the students.
- Students think TIP activities give them self-esteem, self-confidence, and skills, and connect them with business networks and career options.

Weaknesses:

- No one person or unit has ultimate responsibility for coordinating, organizing, or promoting TIP programs.
- Relatively few faculty members are participating in or aware of TIP offerings.
- Among students there is a lack of awareness and communication regarding TIP offerings.
- The TIP programs do not provide a specific degree or certificate.
- There is no requirement to participate in the TIP program, which is a misalignment with the University's and Management's commitments to experiential learning.
- There is no mandatory academic advising for the TIP program.

Recommendations:

Structure

1. Create the position of Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning), with the mandate to become the champion and coordinator of experiential learning.
2. Ensure the Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) is a faculty member.
3. Ensure that the Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) has the ability to work with other academic areas and staff functions in a congenial manner.
4. Require first-year Management students to see an academic advisor before they can register for their second year. Require that transfer students see an academic advisor before the end of the first semester before they can register for their second semester.
5. Allocate adequate resources to experiential learning and academic advising.

Communications

6. In the *Supplementary Policies: Performance Indicators - For Faculty and Academic Assistants*, clarify and update point 4. *Service/Contributions to the University and Society* to reflect experiential learning.
7. During faculty members' performance reviews, the Dean should emphasize the importance of experiential learning and encourage participation in experiential learning.
8. The Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) should work closely with academic area coordinators and academic advisors.
9. The Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) should develop checklists, policy and procedure documents, and guide books for students.

10. Use technology to disseminate and promote experiential learning activities.

Recognition

11. Explore the possibility of granting an Experiential Learning Certificate.

12. After the update in recommendation 6, the Dean should commend and recognize faculty members for participating in experiential learning in the letter that summarizes faculty member performance.

Program Response

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee noted that they agree with the twelve recommendations provided in the External Review Report. The response went on to comment that several of the recommendations touch on areas that the TIP faculty and staff do not have total control over. For example, the recommendations that deal with the following will have to be championed by the Dean and vetted through the Faculty of Management: establishing an Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) [recommendations 1-3]; changing the *Supplementary Policies* [recommendation 6]; emphasizing experiential learning in faculty performance reviews [recommendation 7]; and implementing mandatory academic advising [recommendation 4].

In addition, the Program Response stated agreement with changing “Theory Into Practice Programs” to “Experiential Learning.”

Dean’s Response

The Dean’s Response noted that the Theory Into Practice Programs are at the core of the Faculty of Management strategic plan. It also stated that Management’s application for accreditation by AACSB International depends partly on delivering “work-integrated learning.”

The response went on to respond to the 12 recommendations from the External Review Report:

1. *Create the position of Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning), with the mandate to become the champion and coordinator of experiential learning.*

The Faculty of Management will create the position of Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning).

2. *Ensure the Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) is a faculty member.*

3. *Ensure that the Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) has the ability to work with other academic areas and staff functions in a congenial manner.*

8. *The Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) should work closely with academic area coordinators and academic advisors.*

9. *The Assistant Dean (Experiential Learning) should develop checklists, policy and procedure documents, and guide books for students.*

4. *Require first-year Management students to see an academic advisor before they can register for their second year. Require that transfer students see an academic advisor before the end of the first semester before they can register for their second semester.*

The Faculty of Management will allocate mandatory academic advising for new and transfer students.

5. Allocate adequate resources to experiential learning and academic advising.	Related actions will be ongoing. Current related actions include the Market Modifier grant, a gift from RBC, and the Agility program.
6. In the Supplementary Policies: Performance Indicators - For Faculty and Academic Assistants, clarify and update point 4. Service/Contributions to the University and Society to reflect experiential learning.	Faculty of Management Supplementary Policies are currently under review.
7. During faculty members' performance reviews, the Dean should emphasize the importance of experiential learning and encourage participation in experiential learning.	
12. After the update in recommendation 6, the Dean should commend and recognize faculty members for participating in experiential learning in the letter that summarizes faculty member performance.	
10. Use technology to disseminate and promote experiential learning activities.	The Faculty of Management will use technology strategically.
11. Explore the possibility of granting an Experiential Learning Certificate.	The Faculty of Management will explore student recognition possibilities.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Theory Into Practice Programs 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:

Alan Siaroff
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

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