

TO: Mike Mahon
President

DATE: March 30, 2011

FROM: Bob Boudreau
Chair, University Review Committee

RE: B.H.Sc. Addictions Counselling Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the University Review Committee approved the B.H.Sc. Addictions Counselling program review results at its February 2, 2011 meeting. The B.H.Sc. Addictions Counselling quality assurance review produced four documents:¹

- 1) *Academic Quality Assurance Self-Study Report* (June 1, 2006) – self-study report drafted by the Program Review Committee.
- 2) *External Review of the Addictions Counselling Program in the School of Health Sciences, University of Lethbridge* (July 13, 2006) – prepared by external reviewers Marvin J. Westwood (University of British Columbia) and Patricia Erickson (University of Toronto).
- 3) *Program Response to the External Review Report of the Addictions Counselling Program in the School of Health Sciences, University of Lethbridge* (September 11, 2006) – written by Gary Nixon, Chair of the Program Review Committee, this is the response of the Program Review Committee to the external review.
- 4) Dean’s response to the academic quality assurance review (December 20, 2006) – response to the review, written by Chris Hosgood, Dean of Health Sciences. Chris Hosgood presented the results of the review to the University Review Committee on February 2, 2011.

The self-study noted the effectiveness of the programming and the evidence-based practice approach. It also identified several areas of concern to be addressed in the future: the lack of a provincial licensing body for addictions counsellors; the need for a marketing strategy to improve student recruitment and expand the program; the requirement to secure more internship sites so the program can grow; and the need to augment the programming in the degree (for example, to increase training in mental health and concurrent disorders).

The external review praised Addictions Counselling as a “very strong undergraduate program,” while noting some areas for improvement. These included low involvement of FNMI students, narrower opportunities for graduates due to lack of Masters-level training, lack of publicity for the program, and weak emphasis on cross-cultural awareness of diverse groups. The external reviewers had ten recommendations for improvement.

¹ All documents are available upon request.

Notable among these were the following recommendations: raise the profile of the program nationally and internationally; hire an FNMI faculty member and recruit more FNMI students; establish a counselling/research centre that is an internship site and serves local clients; make an effort to develop a Masters-level addictions program; enhance course content so it reflects all population groups and dependencies; improve student gender balance; and develop proposals for collaborative research for submission to peer reviewed funding competitions.

Gary Nixon, Chair of the Program Review Committee wrote a response to the recommendations from the external review and noted actions under way and potential actions to address these suggestions. Related to program awareness, a second student advisor with a recruitment background was hired, and a recruitment plan was scheduled for development. An academic assistant position was created to act as FNMI liaison. Regarding a counselling/research centre, Dr. Nixon cited lack of funding as a current concern but supported the idea. Meetings took place to discuss a Masters program. In response to the comment on reflecting all population groups and dependencies, existing courses on Cultural Context of Addictions and Studies in Particular Populations were enhanced and a course in specific disorders will be changed to examine all major addictive disorders. Recruitment efforts will use materials with male role models to boost the proportion of male students (currently at 15%). Partnerships between junior and senior faculty began, partly with the goal of building collaborative research teams. In conclusion, Dr. Nixon noted that the program provides a strong foundation from which to build in the future.

In his response to the review results, Dean of Health Sciences Chris Hosgood provided additional information on plans for addressing the recommendations that arose from the review:

- As a possible point of entry for FNMI students in to Addictions Counselling, a Health Sciences course has become part of the First Nations Transition Program.
- Health Sciences created an Academic Assistant position, which was dedicated to FNMI support and liaison for the program. (This position has since been combined with another position to become an FNMI support for the entire Faculty of Health Sciences.)
- The Faculty has begun work on a proposal for a Masters in Mental Health Therapies.
- Health Sciences has hired an academic advisor/marketing officer. This person has developed a marketing plan and increased effort to promote the program has begun.
- Required courses have been reconfigured so students study a variety of vulnerable populations.
- An internship coordinator has been appointed.

The University Review Committee is satisfied that the B.H.Sc. Addictions Counselling academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Regards,