

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Office of the Associate Vice-President, Academic

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Waterhouse
Vice-President,
Academic

FROM: Bill Krane,
Associate Vice-President,
Academic

RE: External Review, Faculty of Education

DATE: April 10, 2002

The report of the External Review Committee (ERC) for the Faculty of Education was submitted in April, 2001 following its site visit on March 22 and 23, 2001. The response of the Faculty was submitted on November 28, 2001.

My comments on this external review and the submission from the Faculty are as follows:

1. The ERC provided a number of valuable and thoughtful recommendations on the issue of the effectiveness of communication across program areas and faculty groups. They also suggested various ways to enhance it. Since the time of the site visit, the Faculty has taken steps to implement some of these recommendations by initiating a faculty newsletter and a biweekly colloquia series. The Faculty has also considered enhancements/changes to its existing communication initiatives such as the faculty mentoring program, graduate student orientation, the introduction of graduate seminars, as well as graduate academic writing courses. The Faculty is encouraged to continue pursuing these initiatives. In particular, attention should be paid to the establishment of regular faculty-wide staff meetings and collaborative working relationships between tenure-track faculty and Faculty Associates.
2. It is not apparent in the external review report that the Faculty of Education's strategy for meeting increased demand for Teacher Education within the province was examined. Certainly, many of the recommendations, if carried out, would strengthen the Faculty and its programs. However, no specific recommendations were aimed at the review or development of a strategy to cope with increasing demands in this area. I recommend that the Faculty develop a strategy to meet the needs of Teacher Education in the near future.

2. Similarly, it does not appear that the Faculty of Education's strategy for programming in Northern British Columbia was evaluated in light of the presence of the University of Northern British Columbia. I recommend that the Faculty consider developing such a strategy as a priority item for action.
3. The Graduate Diploma Program was scrutinized by the ERC and led to favorable comments and strong support for the Program. The ERC and the Faculty were in agreement about the abolition of minimum GPA/letter grade requirements and the establishment of a portfolio form of assessment. The Faculty appears to be on track towards implementing this new form of evaluation within the Program.
4. Identifying ways to articulate broad curriculum goals across program areas does not appear to have been specifically addressed in the review report or in the Faculty's response. However, in view of the amount of attention directed at Faculty governance issues, it appears that mechanisms will be put in place to facilitate faculty-wide reviews and discussions of such goals. In particular, the UPC is encouraged to remain attentive to the monitoring of program quality. I suggest the Faculty give consideration to the articulation of broad curriculum goals through its curriculum committees at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
5. Mechanisms for encouraging leadership are inextricably linked to issues of governance, effective communication, intellectual exchange, and meaningful participation in the affairs of the Faculty. If the Faculty continues to follow through with its undertakings on the communication, orientation, and intellectual exchange outlined in its response, certain staff and faculty members will likely respond by assuming leadership roles.
6. The intellectual community for faculty and students and its enhancement are featured in a number of the recommendations of the ERC. Subsequently, the Faculty appears to have taken a number of steps to improve the working environment through biweekly colloquia, semester long team teaching, various communication efforts, increased interaction among graduate students and faculty, a new format for the teaching of qualitative methodology, and planning for a program of cross-disciplinary studies. I would urge the Faculty to continue its work in this area.
7. Although governance issues were not initially identified as a point of focus for the ERC, these appear to have figured significantly in the review process and the Committee's recommendations. The Faculty indicated that there was no support for a major overhaul of its governance structure. However, there does appear to be a continuing interest in reviewing and adjusting some of its existing administrative structures and their operation. I am encouraged by the willingness of the Faculty to consider change, albeit incrementally. The upcoming appointment of a new Dean may stimulate new activity in this area.
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9. With respect to the recommendations concerning the use of technology and technology education, there appears to be a number of initiatives already underway within the Faculty. Further development and expansion in these areas will be necessary for the Faculty to remain current in this field. Additional funding and training should be targeted to these initiatives. Current budgetary pressures will, of course, constrain what can be accomplished.

cc: L. Summers, Director, Academic Planning