

**Final Assessment Report
Academic Review**

Child and Youth Studies

A. Summary

1. The Department's Self Study was considered and approved by the Academic Review Committee of Senate on January 26, 2011.
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw (University of Victoria) and Vappu Tyyska (Ryerson University), and an internal reviewer, James Mandigo (Kinesiology).
3. The site visit occurred on March 6 – 8, 2011.
4. The Reviewers' Report was received on March 29, 2011.
5. The Department's response was provided on April 21, 2011.
6. The decanal response, from Dean Tom Dunk, was received on May 2, 2011.
7. The Department submitted a copy of its Strategic Plan on October 25, 2011.

The academic programs offered by the Department, which were examined as part of the review included:

BA in Child Studies
Child Studies Concurrent BA/BEEd

This is one of the first reviews conducted entirely under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 16, 2010.

B. Strengths of the Program

The reviewers stated:

Overall, the external review team found that the Department has considerable strength and potential. It exhibits leadership within Brock and the broader Niagara region community. It demonstrates excellent commitment to its students and to the multidisciplinary nature of the field of child and youth studies. The dedication of the Department's faculty members to the undergraduate program is admirable. Although tensions due to philosophical differences were apparent during the site visit, it was also clear to the team that the Department has found creative ways in which to address conflicts that might arise due to the multidisciplinary nature of the program.

They go on:

As the self-study notes, the Department of Child and Youth Studies is unique in Canada. Its uniqueness lies in the program's multidisciplinary approach. No other program in Canada provides such an approach to the study of children and youth issues. In addition, the program at Brock University provides a strong broad education rather than only training in a narrow professional field. In these respects the program at Brock offers a much more balanced education compared to other child and youth related programs offered by other universities in Canada (e.g., at the University of Victoria), and in community colleges across the country.

Another unique aspect of the program is the well-balanced implementation of the three clusters (developmental, exceptionalities and socio-cultural). Other programs in Canada (e.g., University of Victoria) emphasize the developmental perspective at the expense of other theoretical lenses. The program at Brock is exceptional in this regard.

In assigning an outcome category of B+, the reviewers note that:

While the program is of excellent regional and provincial quality with strong student demand, it still needs to develop its national and international reputation. The team applauds the Department's accomplishments and strongly recommends that an effort be made to promote the outstanding undergraduate program within national and international audiences.

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers provided 13 discrete recommendations grouped into four categories. These are considered as follows:

A. Recommendations to Current Programs

1. **The Department should engage in a discussion about the viability and usefulness of the Pass Program. Given a new BA with Major program has been added, the viability of the Pass Program now warrants further review. In addition, there are indications based on Brock's 2014 document that such programs be gradually phased out. Finally, the trend towards taking a four-year degree over three year degrees since the elimination of Grade 13 in Ontario is increasing. This is consistent with current Departmental data that has seen a shift from the majority of students graduating with a Pass degree in 2002 to the majority of graduates receiving an Honours degree in 2009.**

In its response, the Department notes:

that the status of the 15 credit Pass Program is in question now that we have offered a BA with Major program (20 credit non-honours degree), and will debate continuing the three year program. The Department notes however that 1) there is still continued popularity of the 15 credit program despite the increased popularity of the 20 credit honours degree and 2) that the 2014 strategic plan's indication that 15 credit programs will be phased out has been challenged across the University.

Dean Dunk concurred, stating that:

A report prepared on the potential costs of replacing all 15 credit with 20 credit programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences showed it is potentially costly. Also, there seems to be interest in maintaining 15 credit degrees at the international level as witnessed in the Bologna Accord. The Faculty of Social Sciences is taking a prudent course, introducing 20 credit non-honours degree programs where there is potential demand and waiting to see what impact this has on the 15-credit degree enrolment.

Subsequently, in a Strategic Plan submitted on October 28, 2011, the Department reported "there will be no change in the status of the Pass Program at the present time. We will, however, continue to monitor enrollments in the Pass Program now that the department is offering a new BA with Major to see if a change of status would be appropriate in the future."

To ARC, it is obvious that the Department has accepted and implemented the recommendation (to “engage in a discussion about the viability and usefulness of the Pass Program”).

Implementation Plan

ARC notes that the Department has implemented the recommendation and no further action is required at this time.

2. The CHYS Con-Ed programs were perceived as being restrictive to the holistic development of the students. For example, there were concerns that students were so restricted in what they had to take that they were not able to take courses that encourage a well-rounded education and/or the opportunity to take sufficient courses to be eligible to have a “teachable” subject area required for certification in a Junior/ Intermediate program. There is a need to discuss how to provide con-ed students with more elective options.

The Department noted that “many curriculum decisions regarding CHYS Con-Ed students lie with the Con-Ed program; they too are aware of the restrictive nature of all Con-Ed programs, and we are both working on ways to alleviate this situation for Con-Ed students.” In supporting the Department’s response, Dean Dunk notes that: “Eliminating restrictions on course options for Con-Ed students can only be done by or in concert with the Faculty of Education.”

ARC sees this matter as one which requires the attention of several players, including other departments involved in concurrent education programs. It is a matter which requires attention from the Department and Inter-Faculty Concurrent Programs Committee of the Faculty of Education.

Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department and Inter-Faculty Committee
Responsible for resources:	Department and Inter-Faculty Committee
Responsible for implementation:	Department and Inter-Faculty Committee
Timeline:	Chair to report by end of 2012-13 academic year

3. The Department of Child and Youth Studies should carefully consider concerns and challenges regarding the proposed streams outlined in the Strategic Plan developed by the Department. The external review team noted that the primary strength of the program lies in its multidisciplinary nature. The team recommends weighing the success of the clusters and multidisciplinary strength of the program with the idea of more narrow-focused streams. There might be a potential for the streams to cause division within the department and might ultimately lead to under-resourcing the current program.

In its response, The Department indicated that it “has just initiated its debate on offering curriculum ‘streams’, and will introduce them only after careful consideration that they do not weaken the multidisciplinary nature of our program.” Dean Dunk concurred with the Department’s response, noting that it is “appropriate given the potential for streams to undermine multi-disciplinarity.”

In its Strategic Plan, the Department states:

The department has considered and weighed the potential of introducing programmatic “streams”, and distinguished between “descriptive streams” that highlight paths in the present program, and “proscriptive streams” that would mean significant curriculum change and have implications for departmental teaching resources. There are two concrete examples of this at present: a “justice stream” that exemplifies the former, and an “Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) stream” that fits the latter description. The department noted that the development of descriptive streams would be useful in offering student alternative career paths to education, but showed caution regarding proscriptive streams that would have implications for our multidisciplinary program and departmental teaching resources. The department will continue discussing the justice and ABA streams before deciding on any formal policy for the implementation of streams more widely.

Thus, ARC considers that this recommendation (to “carefully consider the matter”) has been accepted and is in progress.

Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Chair to report by end of 2013-14 academic year

4. The name of Cluster B (Diversity) is misleading and we recommend this be changed to Exceptionalities, to more accurately reflect its content.

In its response, the Department stated that it would “debate changing the same of the ‘Diversity’ cluster to ‘Exceptionalities’ as a possibly more accurate description of content in that cluster” and Dean Dunk noted that: “Given the nature of the courses in Cluster B a name change may indeed be appropriate.”

Subsequently, in its Strategic Plan, the Department reported:

The department will change the name of the “cluster B” courses previously referred to as “diversity” courses (and other like courses in our curriculum) to “exceptionalities”, which more accurately represents their content. This is mostly a matter of changing our web page and promotional description of our program. Two courses that use the term “diversity” in their title will be amended in the next UPC submission.

Thus, ARC considers that this recommendation has been accepted and implemented.

Implementation Plan

ARC notes that the Department has implemented the recommendation and no further action is required at this time.

B. Curriculum Recommendations

1. There are a number of recommendations related to the curriculum, course content, and delivery: (i) The content of required courses in other departments (e.g. psychology, sociology, education) requires review for redundancy in relation to the required CHYS courses. (ii) The CHYS curriculum could be enhanced with attention to childhood (e.g. play, exceptionalities, sociological/anthropological perspectives), because the current curriculum is more heavily oriented toward youth issues. (iii) Areas of positive child and youth development might be explored to balance out courses that are more problem-focus (iv) Additional courses on sexuality and culture could be explored.
2. Further dialogue between faculty members is needed to address issues pertaining to connecting seminars to practice. While the students commented on the desire to increase opportunities to provide more service learning opportunities within the community, there is concern expressed by faculty and staff around resources to support enhancing such opportunities. There was also no consensus from faculty around the need to enhance service-learning opportunities.
3. Students suggested that the practicum seminars are used to talk about their service-learning placement, as opposed to instructor-defined material, so that they could learn from each other. The Department may wish to consider how time in seminar could be used to enable students to discuss and share experiences related to their practicum/internships.
4. Currently, the 2nd year required practicum gives only a half credit to students, meaning that they only get credit for the in-class component of their learning but not for the community portion. It may be advisable to grant students full credit while the faculty would get a half credit for teaching the 12 weeks over the 24-week period.

In its response, the Department said:

The four recommendations listed here (redundancy, attention to childhood, more positive focus, and more courses on sexuality and culture) are each interesting points for discussion, and will be considered during the June retreat. Several faculty members, however, felt that there is already sufficient childhood focus in our curriculum. Where individual faculty research interests may be more in the area of youth studies, they all deliver sociological and anthropological perspectives on childhood in their teaching.

Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 all seemed to pertain to the issue of “service learning” and the desire of students for more practical training. These two are different, though related, issues. Both the self-study and the external report make note of a desire for more practical training, but this should occur throughout the curriculum and not only through CHYS 2P15. Many faculty believe that “practical training” should not be pursued at the expense of theoretical breadth.

The Department also notes that CHYS 2P15 is a new course, and we are looking for ways to deliver it in an effective, and economical, manner. We are currently debating shifting this from a half credit to a full credit for students, but this may

be very difficult to accommodate and would in any case further restrict curriculum choices for Con-Ed students contrary to paragraph 2, above.

Then, in its Strategic Plan:

The department discussed curriculum review extensively at the June 2011 retreat and concluded that while CHYS has little control about what material is covered in other programs (for example in Psychology or Sociology), it is our responsibility to ensure that a child and youth perspective be highlighted in all of our courses in order to make them distinct from other programs. The department will monitor for redundancy within our program by establishing subcommittees each year to provide a forum in which faculty can share information on what topics and materials they use in their teaching, and by making PDF copies of our course outlines available on our secure Sakai site. The department consensus is that much of our curriculum already focuses on childhood, and questioned the perception that our courses are overwhelmingly “problem-focused”. Given current resource constraints, moreover, offering any additional courses to what is already on the curriculum is not possible.

The department is committed to advancing service learning opportunities so long as this does not erode the academic rigor of the overall program. CHYS 2P15 appears to be a new service learning course on offer, but the department points out that this course has existed for many years as a component in another course; we will continue to refine our approach in CHYS 2P15 as well as explore possibilities for integrating service learning opportunities in other courses, such as 3P39, 3P92, 3V94 and 4V10, and other courses as appropriate. The department reiterates its concerns about resources, however, as service learning courses are extremely labour intensive and expensive to mount. The department will consider putting a third year service learning course on the curriculum in the future to bridge between CHYS 2P15 and CHYS 4F95, the Applied Research project that we have committed to introduce in 2013, but planning for that course is on hold until the resources required to run it are secured.

In his response, Dean Dunk stated:

I favour combining theoretical, intellectual, and applied components whenever possible so as to avoid creating or strengthening students’ common assumption that these are separate activities. To put this in slightly different language, we should not reproduce in our university courses the separation of conception and execution that is built into the division of labour in many work places. Critical thinking demands that we be aware of the linkages between these two aspects of any task. Moreover, more service learning and courses that require placements would require greater investment in the support staff necessary to organize these courses. In the current budget climate, this is not possible. Having said this, ARC should recognize that CHYS programs involve more practical and/or service learning opportunities than many other programs. As in many other respects, this is another area where CHYS is a leader at Brock.

ARC sees that the Department has dealt with the set of recommendations as follows:

- a) it will monitor for internal redundancy;
- b) the suggestion for more attention to childhood has not been accepted;
- c) offering additional courses is not seen as possible; and
- d) it remains committed to advancing service learning opportunities but resources do not allow for any significant additions.

More generally, ARC sees that the Department is putting in place a process for the regular review of its curriculum that will ensure that an appropriate balance between the practical and the theoretical will be maintained.

Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Chair to report by end of 2013-14 academic year

5. Given concerns expressed by students that they do not know which course is being offered on a yearly basis, the Department should clearly communicate with students which courses are being offered temporarily or permanently discontinued or rotated.

According to the Department: “This recommendation would very difficult to accommodate; like all Brock students, our students learn what is offered when the calendar is posted, and until that time changes may occur due to budget or personnel issues.” Dean Dunk notes that: “In the absence of a longer budget planning cycle (say, for example, two years as practiced at some universities), it is very difficult to make commitments regarding course offerings over a longer term.”

ARC concludes that this recommendation has not been accepted and will not be implemented.

Implementation Plan

The recommendation has not been accepted and will not be acted upon.

C. Budget Allocation Recommendations

1. CHYS currently offers CHYS 1F90, 2P10, 2P15 and 3P74. Each of these courses is a required course for all concurrent education students across the University. Further dialogue is needed between the Faculty of Education and the Dept of CHYS around ensuring that sufficient resources are provided to the Dept of CHYS to support the large class sizes and the substantial amount of resources needed to teach these courses.

The Department “has already commenced discussions with Con-Ed on its requirements; presently, they are debating removing CHYS 3P74 from the list of required courses, and we will continue to make our resource problems known to them.” Dean Dunk states:

This is one of the very clear examples of why budgets should be tied in relatively formulaic way to enrolments. The courses listed by the reviewers serve a wide range of Con-Ed programs. Increased enrolments in any of them impact enrolments in certain CHYS courses. Going forward it will be impossible to continue to provide these courses for all Con-Ed programs if the Faculty budget continues to shrink. I agree with the Department’s approach to this recommendation, especially in the current budget circumstances.

While ARC applauds the efforts of the Department to meet the needs of all Concurrent Education students, it sees this matter as one which lies outside the purview of the Department. The larger issue of appropriate resourcing of “service teaching” requires the attention of those University officers responsible for the budget allocation process.

Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving:	VP, Finance and Administration and the Provost and VP, Academic
Responsible for resources:	VP, Finance and Administration and the Provost and VP, Academic
Responsible for implementation:	VP, Finance and Administration and the Provost and VP, Academic
Timeline:	Provost to report by end of 2012-13 academic year

2. The Department should re-visit the balance of teaching resources available in relation to each cluster, and consider hiring additional faculty to teach courses in the socio-cultural cluster.

The Department notes that:

“[N]o faculty member has been hired to [a] specific cluster, but having said that six of our current 19 faculty members have their PhDs in ‘socio-cultural’ disciplines, with at least an additional two capable of teaching courses in this area. The Department will continue to discuss this recommendation though at present new hires are unlikely given the current budget environment.

In his response, Dean Dunk states:

Given the budget situation and the needs of other programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences, it is not possible to provide additional faculty positions to CHYS at this time from the existing Faculty budget. Any re-balancing of teaching resources would have to follow from retirements or resignations. CHYS is not likely to see faculty turnover in the short to mid term. Thus, the Department’s response to this recommendation is appropriate.

ARC concludes that this recommendation has not been accepted and will not be implemented.

Implementation Plan

The recommendation has not been accepted and will not be acted upon.

D. Increasing the Reputation of the Department Recommendations

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| 1. The University should promote the Department of Child and Youth Studies as an exemplary multidisciplinary program within the context of the institution. |
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Both the Department and the Dean agree with this recommendation. However, as Dean Dunk states:

The Faculty of Social Sciences is short-staffed in a number of areas including communications. I have begun discussions with the Office of Marketing and Communications regarding the resources required to develop a communications and marketing strategy specifically for the Faculty. CHYS is indeed one of the premier examples of inter or multi-disciplinarity at Brock and one of Brock's unique programs. It is frustrating at times to hear members of the Brock community talk about inter, multi, or transdisciplinarity as a new phenomenon that needs to be encouraged when in fact there are already many well-established successful such programs. In Social Sciences alone there are nine units that offer such programs at the undergraduate or graduate level. Marketing and Communications is a priority for the Office of the Dean of Social Sciences over the next two years. We will work with all the units in the Faculty to raise the profile of their programs both internally and externally.

ARC considers that this recommendation has been accepted and is in the process of implementation. It notes that support from units such as University Marketing and Communications and Office of the Registrar (Undergraduate Recruitment) will be essential to such implementation.

Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Dean and Provost
Responsible for resources:	Provost/VP, Academic
Responsible for implementation:	Dean, Department Chair, University Marketing and Communications and Office of the Registrar (Undergraduate Recruitment)
Timeline:	Dean to report by end of 2013-14 academic year.

2. There is a need to pay attention to other diversities in addition to gender, in course content, the student body, and faculty membership. With the increasing diversification of the population (based on race, ethnicity, and immigrant status), and in the interest of addressing issues related to globalization and enhancing the program's international appeal; there is a wide range of topics and issues that could be addressed, to maintain the relevance of the program. We note that there has been some development in this area in the course offerings and encourage this development, with attendant attention to student and faculty composition. A specific recommendation is to hire faculty from the designated "visible minority" groups, in accordance with legislation.

In its response, the Department (with Dean Dunk’s agreement) states:

CHYS’s curriculum includes numerous courses that touch on issues of gender, race, class, ethnicity, culture and ability, but we agree with the reviewers that the diversity of the student body may not reflect this. Broadening child and youth studies beyond its traditional appeal to young, middle class females is a challenge, and we continue to look for ways in which to do this. Should we ever have the opportunity to hire a new faculty member, the Department’s employment equity plan calls for preference being given to candidates from “visible minorities” and candidates with disabilities (CHYS has achieved gender equity).

In its Strategic Plan, the Department provides the following:

The department must do more to diversify itself. Our student body remains predominantly female and does not fully reflect Canada’s cultural diversity. The predominant goal for many of them is a teaching career. While we do not wish to dissuade students from this career, we do wish to enhance the program by appealing to students with other career options in mind, as well as providing alternatives to those who may later choose another path. We have made some progress towards diversification of the curriculum, but we need to go further towards distinguishing ourselves as more than a teacher education program predominantly directed to those who wish to teach in the primary/junior sector. The department will explore introducing opportunities to study abroad, student exchanges, more curriculum development in conjunction with other programs in the University, and placing more of an emphasis on youth work.

ARC concludes that the recommendation has been accepted and will be implemented.

Implementation Plan (Second Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Chair to report by end of 2013-14 academic year

D. Recommendations to be Implemented

The IQAP requires that ARC “set out and prioritize the recommendations that are selected for implementation.” Using the specific ARC proposals enunciated above, the following priorities are proposed:

First Priority:

Recommendations A.2, and C.1.

Second Priority

Recommendations A.3, B.1-4, D.1 and D.2.

Implemented Recommendations

Recommendations A.1 and A.4.

E. Recommendations that Will Not be Implemented

Recommendations B.5 and C.2.

/pb