

# Final Assessment Report

## Geography Integrated Program Review

### A. Summary

1. The Department's Self Study was considered and approved by the Academic Review Committee of Senate on February 15, 2013.
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Evelyn Peters, University of Winnipeg and Dan Shrubsole, University of Western Ontario and an internal reviewer, Nick Baxter-Moore, Communication, Popular Culture and Film.
3. The site visit occurred on March 12-14, 2013.
4. The Reviewers' Report was received on April 12, 2013.
5. The Department's response was received on May 13, 2013.
6. The Dean of Social Sciences response from Ingrid Makus was received on September 3, 2013.
7. The Dean of Graduate Studies response from Mike Plyley was received on June 25, 2013.
8. The Undergraduate Program Committee response was received on April 19, 2013.
9. The Graduate Studies Committee response was received on June 26, 2013.

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

MA in Geography  
BA (Honours and Pass) in Geography  
BSc (Honours and Pass) in Geography  
BA (Honours and Pass) in Human Geography  
BSc (Honours and Pass) in Physical Geography  
BA/BEd (Honours) in Geography  
BSc/BEd (Honours) in Geography

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on June 6, 2011.

The reviewers assigned the following outcome category:

Outcome Category 3, "Good Quality with Concerns"

## B. Strengths of the Program

The reviewers wrote the following about the program's strengths in section (i):

This is a strong Department that makes valuable contributions to all elements of Brock's strategic priorities.

- We heard again and again, from both students and faculty, about the collegial and supportive working environment.
- The strong commitment to innovate and implement high-quality pedagogy evidenced by faculty when they spoke to us, and their openness to student interaction emphasized by both faculty and students, support Brock's commitment student-centred teaching. Students valued the third-year field courses which emphasize applying material they have learned in earlier classes. The Map Library provides excellent pedagogical support and has been proactive about embedding GIS technologies into teaching programs. Librarians have also been active in teaching students how to use these technologies and introducing them to available data. Faculty members have created a large number of courses and programs in an attempt to meet student needs, and offer both more theoretical approaches and applied courses contributing to professional employment opportunities after graduation. Staff members are committed to improving the student experience.
- The majority of faculty members are highly accomplished researchers. Many have published in well-respected journals and with highly ranked academic presses, and win Tri-Council grants and other research funding awards. Many faculty members are recognized as leaders in their research specializations. These characteristics lend strength to Brock's emphasis on research intensiveness. The Department's MA program has depth and particular strength in the area of 'critical geography'.
- The community-minded element in Brock's strategic plan is taken up in the Geography Department with its opportunities for internships and coop courses at the undergraduate level. Several faculty members conduct research with a variety of local organizations. The Department collaborates with Niagara College to offer a Geomatics concentration, and the skills students learn in a variety of applied courses are valuable in professional job opportunities.
- The Department appears to have a reasonable amount of space as evidenced by its ability to meet the research requirements of its newest faculty member, and could have the capacity to accommodate another appointment's space needs. There also appeared to be convenient social space that was adjacent to many of the Department's main faculty and staff offices that would promote a sense of community. Graduate students had both office and TA space available to them, although we were unable to determine the adequacy of these facilities due to the very limited opportunity we had to meet with graduate students.

## C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers provided thirty-three recommendations for the program.

### Learning Outcomes:

1. The Department should ensure that undergraduate courses and programs find ways of providing better support for the learning outcomes of recognizing the limits of knowledge, working effectively with others, and speaking clearly and effectively.

The Department stated that:

Students up to now may not fully realize how these various outcomes are already built into the format and content of individual courses. Accordingly, and given the increasing emphasis on the establishment and achievement of course learning outcomes at Brock University, the Department will endeavour to explain more explicitly to students how these and other learning outcomes are meant to be achieved in their courses, along with how and why these outcomes matter to them. This will include the provision of relevant details during course lectures, on course outlines, and on assignment instruction sheets. At the half-way point between now and the Department's next Academic Review, the Department will also survey recent undergraduate alumni to determine how well they feel they achieved the desired learning outcomes during their time in the Geography program. This survey will use the same questions as those asked as part of this review in order to ensure the comparability of results.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted but not yet implemented.

### Implementation Plan (First Priority)

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department     |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department     |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department     |
| Timeline:                       | September 2014 |

2. If activities that support the learning outcomes of learning to work effectively with others, speaking clearly and effectively, and applying problem solving skills are not present in MA courses, faculty delivering these courses should find ways of adding them. If they are present, faculty may need to connect these activities more explicitly to specific learning outcomes for students.

The Department responded that it:

feels that a key weakness of the survey completed by current graduate students was how early into most students' programs it was completed. Most of the sixteen individuals who completed the survey were only in their second month as students the MA in Geography program. Thus, the questions that asked them to rate their perceptions regarding the achievement of various learning outcomes were likely asked far too prematurely. Indeed, many of the learning outcomes that rated less favourably in the students' assessments were simply things that had not yet been experienced by those students. ... Nonetheless, faculty teaching in the graduate program will endeavour to be more clear in drawing links between the students' course and research work and the learning outcomes that have been established for MA students. Also, the Department will create an "exit survey" that will be given to students upon graduation in order to keep track more accurately of their perceptions of how well the intended MA program learning outcomes have been realized. As with the undergraduate alumni, this survey will replicate that distributed as part of this academic review to ensure the comparability of data.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate studies stated that:

FGS supports this recommendation, and will work with the Program to develop activities that support the graduate student needs in these areas, either as part of the Master's program offerings, or through the FGS Grad Plus offerings.

ARC considers the recommendation to be similar to recommendation #1. The Committee considers the recommendation to be accepted but not yet implemented.

| <b>Implementation Plan (First Priority)</b> |                |
|---|----------------|
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department     |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department     |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department     |
| Timeline:                                   | September 2014 |

**Program Delivery:**

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|---|
| 3. The Department should ensure that only courses that have a reasonable chance of being offered should be listed in the calendar and those that are not offered in any three year period be removed from the calendar. |
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The Department responded that:

This is something the Department is aware of and that has been discussed at length throughout the review process; most notably, Geography has worried that this is “false advertising.” Thus, the Department is working to “clean up” its undergraduate calendar entry as part of the broader program restructuring, led by the Curriculum Committee, as discussed in the Self-Study document.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by stating:

Not clear if this recommendation pertains only to UG courses - if so, then this is not in the purview of the Dean of Graduate Studies to comment; however, for the record, the so-called “sunset clause” for graduate degree courses is 5 years, not 3 years as it is for UG courses.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted, and expects that changes to the graduate and undergraduate calendars will be made according to established criteria at Brock.

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| <b>Implementation Plan (First Priority)</b> |               |
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department    |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department    |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department    |
| Timeline:                                   | December 2013 |

4. The Department should require teaching assistants to take a relevant course at the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation. Faculty must also ensure that they provide TAs with the appropriate types of support to effectively deliver seminars. The Department should also monitor whether this step is sufficient to change undergraduate student evaluation of teaching assistants and, if it is not, investigate additional measures.

The Department responded that it:

will undertake a number of initiatives to address this recommendation and its associated issues:

- the Department will prepare a handbook for Teaching Assistants that offers instructional advice and information regarding departmental expectations and requirements;
- the Department will offer a mandatory TA orientation workshop at the start of each academic year (with the time used built into the TAs' contractually-regulated allocation of hours)
- Geography faculty will endeavour to provide more active one-on-one mentoring of TAs, especially those who are new to the position;
- Geography faculty will more thoroughly analyze comments regarding Teaching Assistants' performance that are provided on students' course evaluations and will share these with the Teaching Assistants;
- Geography faculty will complete Teaching Assistant evaluations at the conclusion of each contract period;
- the Department will consider the long-term role of Teaching Assistants in Geography courses as part of the Department's ongoing program restructuring; and
- the Department consult with other Departments where Teaching Assistants play a key role in student learning (e.g., Child and Youth Studies) in order to determine what they do to enhance the teaching performance of their TAs.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response, stating that:

The recommendation to *require* TAs to attend CPI workshops is laudable. However, it has budgetary implications and would have to be coordinated through HR since it would have possible implications for all CUPE 4207 TAs and job postings. Thus, the recommendation would need to be approached as a university-wide undertaking rather than that of a single unit.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated:

Not in the purview of the Dean of Graduate Studies to comment per se, but as many of the TAs will be graduate students, and therefore, the FGS would agree this recommendation.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee believes that the Department is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

| <b>Implementation Plan (Second Priority)</b> |                |
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| Responsible for approving:                   | Department     |
| Responsible for resources:                   | Department     |
| Responsible for implementation:              | Department     |
| Timeline:                                    | September 2015 |

5. The Department should pursue ways to expand the use of technology to support learning outside of formal classroom setting.

In its response, the Department stated that it:

is increasingly implementing more technology-use in the classroom when, and if, appropriate. Geography professors are increasingly moving toward hybrid and blended courses. Geography notes, however, that these are time-intensive changes to course-delivery in a climate of doing-more-with-less. Fortunately, funding has been made available to assist faculty in such endeavours; as part of this, Professors [name withheld] and [name withheld] have applied for funding to convert GEOG 1F90 (Introduction to Human Geography) into a blended (lecture + seminar + online) course. Other faculty have expressed interest in pursuing similar projects.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department                                    |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department, Centre for Pedagogical Innovation |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department, Centre for Pedagogical Innovation |
| Timeline:                       | September 2015                                |

6. The Department should continue to examine its course and program revisions so that Physical Geographers can increase their teaching in areas other than Geomatics.

The Department stated that it:

is already following through on this recommendation through its ongoing program restructuring, which is being led by Curriculum Committee.

The Faculty Dean stated, “I agree with the Department’s response” and later added “with the provisions noted in Recommendation 9”.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying that, “the FGS would encourage similar planning and thought go into planning for the course offerings for graduate students.”

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the examination of course and program revisions will be part of the larger curriculum review that the Department states is taking place.

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| <b>Implementation Plan (First Priority)</b> |   |
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department  |
| Timeline:                                   | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14 |

7. As it considers future paths, the Department should give careful consideration to ensuring that its own majors, as well as students in other programs, continue to have reasonable access to courses that serve their priority needs, specifically environmental resource management and GIS courses.

The Department responded that it:

interprets this to mean that it should prioritize what it offers, and is already following through on this recommendation through its ongoing program restructuring. This will involve prioritizing courses' importance to students vis-à-vis the Department of Geography's Degree-Level Expectations and Learning Outcomes, as set forth in Section Three of the Self-Study document. It is also important that to note that the Department currently gives priority during the course registration period to its own Majors, then to Minors and Concurrent Education students, before opening registration to other Brock University students.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response, stating:

I agree with the first part of the Reviewers recommendation but I am unsure of why the reviewers maintain that “environmental resource management and GIS courses” are Geography majors’ “priority needs.” I would point out to ARC as well that the Department has just replaced a retirement with a new colleague with expertise in geomatics.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying that:

the FGS would encourage the Program to explore the potential offerings from other Programs, and put similar planning and thought for the graduate students.

ARC considers this recommendation to ensure that students have reasonable access to desired courses to be accepted.

| <b>Implementation Plan (Third Priority)</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department  |
| Timeline:                                   | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2015/16 |

8. The Department should review the job description of the cartographer and technician with the objective of involving them in some class and lab material delivery, supporting pedagogy and student contact.

The Department stated that it:

will work with the cartographer and the technician to identify areas where more interactivity is possible, then will modify their job descriptions accordingly (in collaboration with the University Administration). However, formal discussions of this nature will not take place until the currently-advertised tenure-track faculty position in Geomatics is filled (i.e., after July 1, 2013), as it is likely that the new faculty member's work will directly impact, and be impacted by, any changes related to this recommendation.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department's response, stating, "As noted above the tenure-track position in Geomatics has been filled."

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying that, "the FGS would encourage similar planning and thought go into planning for the graduate students (if appropriate)."

ARC considers the recommendation to review the job description to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee understands that the Department will work through normal procedures within Human Resources to review this position.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department, Dean of Social Sciences                               |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department, Dean of Social Sciences                               |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department, Human Resources                                       |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15 |

9. The Department should review its agreement with Niagara College and evaluate the tradeoffs involved in offering a large number of Geomatics courses (which appear to be popular with students because of their applied nature), meeting the needs for Physical Geography courses, and freeing up Physical Geographers to teach in their area of substantive research interest.

The Department stated that:

Over the following year, and in advance of next year's scheduled renegotiation and renewal, the Department will review its current agreement with Niagara College in order to maximize the efficiency of program delivery. As part of this, the role of Geomatics courses in all Geography students' learning will be given thorough consideration in the more general program restructuring currently underway.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department's response, stating:

Further, with regard to the recommendation's intent to free up Physical Geographers to teach in their area of substantive research, in principle, I am in support of this for all Faculty members. However this goal must be balanced against the reality that resources are limited and we must respond to enrolment pressures. We simply cannot afford to offer low enrolment courses that satisfy Faculty interests while students have difficulty gaining access to courses and programs they wish to take.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that this discussion would be part of a larger curriculum review that will be taking place (see recommendation #6).

| <b>Implementation Plan (Third Priority)</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department  |
| Timeline:                                   | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2015/16 |

10. The Dean of Mathematics & Science and the Dean of Social Sciences should take the lead on negotiating cooperation in undergraduate teaching between Geography and Earth Sciences

The Department stated that:

This recommendation is already being put into place. The most recent meeting of Deans, Earth Sciences and Geography took place on May 1, 2013. Collaboration in undergraduate course delivery is also part of the Curriculum Committee's aforementioned program restructuring work.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

While this would appear to refer to the UG side of the review, which would be outside the purview of the Dean of Graduate Studies to comment, the FGS would expect to be involved in discussions that went beyond the UG side of things and involved the two existing (or any new) graduate programs (see Earth Sciences FAR).

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and recognizes that it is consistent with the Final Assessment Report for the recent review of Earth Sciences.

#### Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Responsible for approving:      | Departments of Geography and Earth Sciences, Deans of Social Sciences and Math and Science |
| Responsible for resources:      | Departments of Geography and Earth Sciences, Deans of Social Sciences and Math and Science |
| Responsible for implementation: | Departments of Geography and Earth Sciences, Deans of Social Sciences and Math and Science |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15                          |

11. The negotiations between Geography and Earth Sciences led by the Dean of Mathematics & Science and the Dean of Social Sciences should also take account of the shortage of appropriate teaching classrooms.

The Department stated that:

This is intended to be a topic of discussion within the enhanced communications between departments and Deans.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response, noting:

I would add that this is another issue that also needs to be addressed on a university wide basis since it reflects the space problems Brock faces.

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these space resources. The Committee believes this recommendation brings up an issue that should be referred to the proposed "Advisory Committee on Space" which is being discussed by the Senior Administrative Council (SAC).

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation NOT accepted.

12. The Provost should follow up on the discussions between Geography and Earth Sciences to ensure appropriate progress and reasonable decisions are made.

The Department stated that it “has no objection to this recommendation.”

The Faculty Dean stated, “I agree with the recommendation.”

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded:

While this would appear to refer to the UG side of the review, which would be outside the purview of the Dean of Graduate Studies to comment, the FGS would expect to be involved in discussions that went beyond the UG side of things and involved the two existing (or any new) graduate programs (see Earth Sciences FAR).

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee recognizes that it is consistent with the Final Assessment Report for the recent review of Earth Sciences.

| <b>Implementation Plan (Second Priority)</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Responsible for approving:                   | Provost, Deans of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Science and Graduate Studies |
| Responsible for resources:                   | Provost, Deans of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Science and Graduate Studies |
| Responsible for implementation:              | Provost, Deans of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Science and Graduate Studies |
| Timeline:                                    | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15               |

13. The Geography Department should come to a clear understanding of trends in majors, course enrollments and FTE enrollment data.

The Department responded that it:

agrees that this is necessary and will endeavour to do so. However, the Department also maintains that student enrollment statistics must be modified to better reflect the number of students affiliated with a particular program as Majors, Minors, and Concurrent Education students (see table below). For example, all students completing the BA Integrated Studies/BEd Concurrent Education (Junior-Intermediate) program are counted as Humanities students, even if their "teachable subject" is Geography, which is housed in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Thus, the Department will endeavour to obtain accurate and up-to-date statistics regarding this matter and will also advocate for changes in student enrollment reporting conducted by the University's Office of Institutional Analysis. The Department will seek the assistance of the Dean of Social Sciences and the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic, in achieving this latter objective.

| Program and Enrollments   | 2006-07    | 2007-08    | 2008-09    | 2009-10    | 2010-11    | 2011-12    | 2012-13    |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| BA/BSc Geography  | 192        | 196        | 188        | 187        | 177        | 151        | 118        |
| BA Human Geography  | 132        | 110        | 70         | 64         | 65         | 58         | 50         |
| BSc Physical Geography  | 46         | 49         | 41         | 39         | 37         | 30         | 28         |
| BA Geography/ BEd - Concurrent (Intermediate-Senior, Geography as First Teachable/Major)  | 3          | 7          | 6          | 7          | 10         | 11         | 15         |
| BSc Geography/ BEd - Concurrent (Intermediate-Senior, Geography as First Teachable/Major) | 5          | 5          | 3          | 3          | 7          | 5          | 5          |
| BA/BSc Geography (Co-op)  | --         | 9          | 11         | 15         | 17         | 14         | 8          |
| BSc Physical Geography (Co-op)  | --         | 0          | 1          | 1          | 1          | 3          | 4          |
| BA Human Geography (Co-op)  | --         | 0          | 1          | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          |
| Policing and Criminal Justice   | --         | --         | 2          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          |
| <b>TOTAL MAJORS</b>   | <b>378</b> | <b>376</b> | <b>323</b> | <b>318</b> | <b>316</b> | <b>274</b> | <b>230</b> |
| BA Integrated Studies / BEd - Concurrent (Junior-Intermediate, Geography as Teachable)    | 38         | 38         | 41         | 32         | 37         | 47         | 70         |

|   |      |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|---|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| BA or BSc / BEd - Concurrent<br>(Intermediate-Senior, Geography as<br>Second Teachable) | 31   | 31  | 26  | 25  | 24  | 28  | 41  |
| Geography Minors<br>(excluding Integrated Studies<br>students)                          | ??   | 82  | 56  | 49  | 38  | 58  | 52  |
| TOTAL CON ED AND MINORS   | 69   | 151 | 123 | 106 | 99  | 133 | 163 |
| TOTAL   | 447* | 527 | 446 | 424 | 415 | 407 | 393 |

The Faculty Dean stated:

I agree with the recommendation and the Department's statement about the problems with Integrated Studies students being counted as Humanities students regardless of the teachable subjects they are studying. However, in terms of overall enrolments the Annual FTE report does reflect the total number of students enrolled in courses in a given Department.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee recognizes that the present method of recording students into majors should be reviewed. The Committee believes this issue should be referred to the attention of the Senate Planning, Priorities and Budget Advisory Committee and the Ad Hoc Senate Committee on Program Review.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Implementation Plan (First Priority)</b> |  |
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department   |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department, Dean of Social Sciences,<br>Institutional Analysis, Registrar's Office |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department, Dean of Social Sciences<br>Institutional Analysis, Registrar's Office  |
| Timeline:                                   | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic<br>year 2013/14               |

14. The Geography Department should implement the steps it identified in the Self-Study document to address declining enrollments and monitor their effects, changing strategies if enrollments continue to decline.

The Department responded that it:

agrees with this recommendation and is actively working towards the implementation of these strategies.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department's response.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department  |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15 |

15. Geography should explore, or exploit further, synergies between the Geography MA (with its strengths in Critical Geography) and the MA programs in SJES and Critical Sociology.

The Department responded that:

Representatives of the three programs are already active in sharing information about upcoming course offerings with the intent of encouraging students to enroll. The future cross-listing of courses across these and other programs may also be a possibility.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

The FGS strongly agrees with this recommendation, and would support the two units in finding a workable solution that would see both units, and more importantly, potential graduate student benefits.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Graduate Studies         |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Graduate Studies         |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Graduate Studies         |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15 |

16. In cooperation with other graduate programs in critical studies and the Dean of Graduate Studies, the Department should develop a marketing strategy (at Grad Studies level) to cross-promote these three programs.

The Department responded that:

The Associate Dean of Social Sciences (Graduate Studies) has a mandate to do this already; thus, the Department will pursue this further with her.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

The FGS strongly agrees with this recommendation, and would support, and would help the two programs in this endeavour.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted. The Committee expects that the implementation of this recommendation would be dependent on the outcome of recommendations #12 and #15.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Graduate Studies          |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Graduate Studies          |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Graduate Studies          |
| Timeline:                       | Deans of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15 |

17. Since it is recognized that not all members of the Department can be actively and/or regularly engaged in the MA Program in Geography, the Department should actively pursue co-operation with other Departments and research centres (e.g. Earth Sciences, Biological Sciences, Environmental Sustainability Research Centre) to create an MSc program which will provide an opportunity for physical geographers to recruit, teach and supervise graduate students and to compete for Tri-Council funding.

The Department responded that it:

accepts this recommendation. At this point, two Geography faculty members ... have been involved in the recent proposal by the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre to create a Masters of Sustainability program, with Professor [name withheld] playing a key organizing role in this endeavour. Another faculty member ... is currently working to achieve affiliation with the Departments of Earth Science and Biology in order to provide him with an opportunity to participate in their graduate programs. Also, the possibility of establishing a joint MSc program with the Department of Earth Science has been identified as an agenda item for the meetings between the Departments that are now taking place. Finally, the Department's longer-term strategic plan will consider other possible means of co-operating with other departments at the graduate level.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response, noting:

I would add, however, that this recommendation can only be implemented if programs in the Faculty of Math and Science are willing to participate.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

The FGS strongly agrees with this recommendation, and would provide support in the development of a strategy and plan to move forward in an efficient manner, which sees greater support to the graduate students in terms resources - courses, support, intellectual exchange, etc.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

### Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department of Geography   |
| Responsible for resources:      | Departments of Geography and Earth Sciences,<br>Environmental Sustainability Research Centre,<br>Deans of Social Sciences, Mathematic and Science<br>and Graduate Studies |
| Responsible for implementation: | Departments of Geography and Earth Sciences,<br>Environmental Sustainability Research Centre,<br>Deans of Social Sciences, Mathematic and Science<br>and Graduate Studies |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic<br>year 2014/15  |

18. Given potential synergies with cognate programs, such as Social Justice (SJES) and Critical Sociology, or, given the research interests of some of its members, with Communication, Popular Culture & Film, the Geography Department should consider the development of a joint, or inter-(trans-) disciplinary PhD program. In pursuing these discussions, the Department must ensure that it obtains adequate additional resources and/or makes necessary trade-offs with current undergraduate or graduate commitments.

The Department responded that it:

is eager to one day be involved in the delivery of a PhD program and, therefore, agrees with this recommendation. It also agrees quite strongly that this can only occur with adequate resources being in place. The Graduate Program Director will identify this as a topic for discussion at an upcoming meeting of the Social Sciences Graduate Program Directors.

The Faculty Dean stated:

The Faculty Strategic Plan endorses growth of graduate programs. However, it identifies its first priorities in areas other than the one identified in this recommendation. Thus, this is a recommendation with which I agree in principle but which I see as being a mid to long term achievement (four to six years) and highly dependent on a number of internal and external variables, such as the university's financial situation and government policy towards and financial support for graduate growth at Brock, among others variables.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

The FGS strongly agrees with this recommendation, and would provide support in the development of a strategy and plan to move forward in an efficient manner, which sees greater support to the graduate students in terms resources - courses, support, intellectual exchange, etc.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted but not yet implemented.

| <b>Implementation Plan (Second Priority)</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Responsible for approving:                   | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:                   | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation:              | Department  |
| Timeline:                                    | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15 |

19. The Department's current evaluation of the number of courses that can be supported by existing faculty should also consider course offerings at the graduate level in order to address course availability for timely MA completion.

The Department responded that it:

is currently considering this matter as part of its overall program restructuring process, and will also discuss this issue at its Graduate Program Retreat in June 2013.

The Faculty Dean stated:

I agree with the Department's response and await to hear the outcome of the discussion at the retreat. I need to add that this is an issue that is related to workload standards in so far as there must be some enrolment requirements for graduate courses to count as part of scheduled teaching. The current discussions between BUFA and the University about the workload task force report hopefully will provide some direction

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying, "The FGS strongly agrees with this recommendation."

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Implementation Plan (First Priority)</b> |   |
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department  |
| Timeline:                                   | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14 |

20. The Graduate Program Director should implement the measures proposed in the Self-Study document to reduce MA time to completion.

The Department responded that the:

Graduate Program Director has been actively implementing these measures since he took over the position in July 2012. He will monitor the impacts of these changes over the next few years as successive cohorts of students move through the MA program.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

The FGS strongly agrees with this recommendation, and would provide support in the development of a strategy and plan to move forward on this.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department  |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14 |

21. The Graduate Program Director should seek out best practices for reducing time to completion from cognate Departments and programs.

The Department responded that:

In 2011 the Department's Graduate Program Director at-the-time put together the measures identified in Recommendation #20 by inquiring about best practices regarding time-to-completion that were being used elsewhere. The current Graduate Program Director began to implement these measures upon taking over the position in July 2012.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

The FGS strongly agrees with this recommendation, and would provide support in the development of a strategy and plan to move forward on this. We can provide any number of models being used successfully across the University for the Program to adopt, or to use to develop their own model/template.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department  |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14 |

22. The Graduate Program Director should report progress in reducing time-to-completion for MA students to the Department and to the Dean of Graduate Studies annually, and consider whether additional measures are needed if these times do not fall.

The Department responded that:

As part of the Department’s ongoing effort in this regard, the Graduate Program Director routinely discusses time-to-completion issues with the Department, with the Dean, and with other Departments at meetings of the University’s Graduate Council.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying, “The FGS agrees with this recommendation, and will work with the program on this issue.”

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department, Dean of Graduate Studies                              |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department, Dean of Graduate Studies                              |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14 |

23. The proposed rationalization of courses and programs at the undergraduate level should allow for faculty not currently involved in MA teaching to participate in the development of cross- or trans-disciplinary MSc programs.

The Department responded that it:

agrees with this recommendation; as noted in its responses to Recommendations #15-18, however, it is already exploring and participating in other graduate program possibilities.

The Faculty Dean stated:

This recommendation actually reads like an observation. As such it may be true. We will only actually know once the changes have been approved and implemented

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying that:

The FGS strongly agrees with this recommendation, and would provide support in the development of a strategy and plan to move forward on this.

ARC considers this recommendation to explore participation in trans-disciplinary programs to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department  |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15 |

24. The Geography Department should participate in the development of one or two new transdisciplinary MSc programs in collaboration with Earth Sciences, Biology, and/or the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre.

The Department responded that it:

supports this recommendation, but only on the condition that necessary resources are provided. At the same time, and as noted earlier, Professor [name withheld] has been an active participant in the creation of the new Master of Sustainability program led by the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre (since May 2012).

The Faculty Dean stated:

I agree with the Department's response in principle. However, the FOSS alone cannot guarantee that resources are available for such initiatives. Also, please see comments above with regard to other recommendations encouraging new transdisciplinary MSc programs.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

While the FGS agrees with this recommendation, and would provide support in the development of a strategy and plan to move forward on this, it seems that Recommendation 23 would be the better way to move forward while other possibilities are explored, such as adding fields to existing programs to expand opportunities to both faculty and potential graduate students.  
(See Earth Sciences FAR).

ARC considers this recommendation to be similar to recommendation #17. The Committee considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department  |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15 |

25. The recommended leadership of the Dean of Mathematics and Science and the Dean of Social Sciences in bringing together the Departments of Earth Sciences and Geography for the purpose of ensuring cooperation on undergraduate courses should also address the creation of a joint MSc program.

The Department responded that it “supports this recommendation.”

The Faculty Dean stated:

I agree with the Department’s response. As reported above, the first meeting has occurred. We will see how these discussions develop. Again, this requires participation of departments from Math and Sciences.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

Although FGS was not included here, the FGS agrees with this recommendation, and would provide support in the development of a strategy and plan to move forward on this, it seems that Recommendation 23 would be the better way to move forward while other possibilities are explored, such as adding fields to existing programs to expand opportunities to both faculty and potential graduate students. (See Earth Sciences FAR).

ARC considers this recommendation to be similar to recommendation #17 and #24. The Committee considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

| <b>Implementation Plan (Second Priority)</b> |  |
|--|--|
| Responsible for approving:                   | Department, Deans of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Science and Graduate Studies |
| Responsible for resources:                   | Department, Deans of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Science and Graduate Studies |
| Responsible for implementation:              | Department, Deans of Social Sciences, Mathematics and Science and Graduate Studies |
| Timeline:                                    | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2014/15                  |

26. In order to allow faculty members in Geomatics and Physical Geography to contribute to Brock's pursuit of transdisciplinary initiatives and comprehensive status, the senior administration should consider allocating an additional tenure stream appointment to the Department in specialty areas that support transdisciplinarity.

The Department responded that it "supports this recommendation."

The Faculty Dean stated:

I agree with the spirit of this recommendation. However, in the current financial situation and given other enrolment pressures within the Faculty, I cannot endorse this recommendation.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated, "The issue of faculty resources is not in the purview of the Dean of Graduate Studies."

ARC considers this recommendation to be worthy of consideration but outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee expects that the program will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

**Implementation Plan**

Recommendation NOT accepted.

**Additional Recommendations:**

27. The Department should produce a 3-5 year Strategic Plan showing how it will match its capacity to support undergraduate and graduate programs with its available resources. The Strategic Plan should also address the need to support faculty research, the balance between departmental and disciplinary needs, and software support. This document would address many of the recommendations contained in this report.

The Department responded that it:

will commence the formulation of a Strategic Plan at its June 2013 Departmental Retreat. A sub-committee will then be formed to continue the planning process afterward.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

In light of the potential joint planning across multiple units that are suggested in the various recommendations of this report, the FGS agrees with this recommendation.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

| <b>Implementation Plan (First Priority)</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department  |
| Timeline:                                   | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14 |

28. All Geography Faculty should be strongly encouraged to integrate library skills into curriculum planning, including application of GIS, and that this integration should be systematically coordinated throughout the curriculum - undergraduate programs, Years 1 to 4, and Graduate Program.

The Department responded by saying that:

Teaching students to use library resources has been a long-standing part of many courses and, in some cases, faculty members do this themselves without seeking the direct involvement of library personnel. However, more and more Geography courses have come to rely on resources from the James Gibson Library and Map Library, as well as the direct involvement of library personnel. There is an eagerness to increase this reliance, especially given the proven effectiveness of the library and the librarians. As such, the Department fully agrees with this recommendation.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Responsible for approving:      | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:      | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department  |
| Timeline:                       | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14 |

29. The ITS, the Map Library and the Department should assess the need for additional software support for GIS and RS and, if appropriate, redefine a current job description or develop a new position within the Department, ITS or Map Library to serve this need.

The Department responded that:

At present, the Department is working closely with the technician ... and cartographer ... to determine how they can provide additional software support for GIS and RS. A meeting ... took place on Wednesday, May 8, 2013. They have agreed to work collaboratively to address these software support issues.

Professor [name withheld] also recently met with [name withheld] in the Map Library to determine how they can work collaboratively, with ITS, to better address software support issues (including the delays experienced by faculty requiring ArcGIS 10.1 installations on their office machines). They plan to meet with ITS to discuss issues related to software support before the Departmental Retreat in June 2013. At that time, all matters related to software support will be further discussed, including the possibility of redefining a current job description to serve this need.

Given that the Map Library does not have access to the campus-wide lab license for ENVI 5.0 (commonly-used remote-sensing software), the Department purchased a copy of the software for them in early May 2013. Working collaboratively with Professor [name withheld], they are now in the process of developing learning modules for those unfamiliar with image analysis.

The Faculty Dean agreed with the Department response.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying that, “the FGS would encourage similar planning and thought go into planning for the graduate students (if appropriate).”

ARC considers this recommendation to be worthy of consideration but to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee’s jurisdiction. The Committee believes that the recommendation brings up an issue which should be brought to the attention of the Senate Information Technology and Infrastructure Committee.

#### **Implementation Plan**

Recommendation NOT accepted.

30. The Department should address space issues in its Strategic Plan.

The Department responded that it “agrees, and will address space issues in its Strategic Plan.”

The Faculty Dean stated:

I agree with the Department’s response. As has been discussed in virtually every ARC review of programs in the FOSS, space is a serious issue for the Faculty and needs to be addressed at the university-wide level.

The Dean of Graduate Studies responded by saying:

In light of the potential joint planning across multiple units that are suggested in the various recommendations of this report, the FGS agrees with this recommendation.

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these space resources.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Implementation Plan (First Priority)</b> |   |
| Responsible for approving:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for resources:                  | Department  |
| Responsible for implementation:             | Department  |
| Timeline:                                   | Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14 |

## **CONFIDENTIAL Recommendations:**

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| 31. Confidential Recommendation |
|---------------------------------|

As per the IQAP Section II J. 6. f) regarding confidential recommendations “relating to personnel issues or other matters involving specific individuals” found in the Reviewers’ Report, this section “ will only be released to the Dean(s), the academic unit and ARC.”

## 32. Confidential Recommendation

As per the IQAP Section II J. 6. f) regarding confidential recommendations “relating to personnel issues or other matters involving specific individuals” found in the Reviewers’ Report, this section “ will only be released to the Dean(s), the academic unit and ARC.”

### 33. Confidential Recommendation

As per the IQAP Section II J. 6. f) regarding confidential recommendations “relating to personnel issues or other matters involving specific individuals” found in the Reviewers’ Report, this section “ will only be released to the Dean(s), the academic unit and ARC.”

## **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 1,2,3,6,13,19,20,21,22,27,28,30

Second Priority:

Recommendations 4,5,8,10,12,14,15,16,17,18,23,24,25

Third Priority:

Recommendations 7,9

## **E. Recommendations that Will Not be Implemented**

Recommendations 11,26,29

## **F. Confidential Recommendations**

Recommendations 31,32,33