Final Assessment Report

Tourism and Environment Undergraduate Program

A. Summary

1. The Department's Self Study was considered and approved by the Academic Review Committee of Senate on February 22, 2013.

2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Stephen Murphy, University of Waterloo, Tom Hinch, University of Alberta and an internal reviewer, Rick Cheel, Department of Earth Sciences.

3. The site visit occurred on March 17-19, 2013.

4. The Reviewers' Report was received on April 15, 2013.

5. The Department's response was received on May 17, 2013 and the Addendum to the Department's response was received on October 28, 2013.

6. The Dean of Social Sciences response from Ingrid Makus was received on September 3, 2013.

7. The Undergraduate Program Committee response was received on May 9, 2013.

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

    BA Pass and Honours in Tourism and Environment
    BA 4-year with Major in Tourism and Environment
    Certificate in Tourism and Environment

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

The reviewers assigned the Tourism and Environment programs an Outcome Category 3, "Good Quality with Concerns".

B. Strengths of the Program

The reviewers stated that:

TREN possesses a strong cohort of faculty and staff. The faculty complement includes scholars who are internationally recognized as leaders in their respective fields of tourism … and the environmental sustainability … More broadly, faculty members display a range of talents and expertise that translate to strong teaching and research activities although this will be challenged by a pending retirement. The review team was particularly impressed with the collegiality evident throughout the site visit and credit [the Chair] for fostering this positive dynamic under his tenure as Department Chair. TREN faculty and staff demonstrated a high level of respect for the contributions of their colleagues even though at some level, they are competing for scarce resources. This level of collegiality is rare and would be highly valued in any academic institution. Students felt that professors were approachable and genuinely concerned about their welfare although there is an opportunity to build on this perception in meaningful ways. Students do have opportunities such as publishing with professors - this is rather rare in an undergraduate focused Department and is laudable. [Name withheld] is particularly noteworthy for her efforts here.

Notwithstanding the concern expressed about the relatively low admission averages for students entering this program, the academic performance of these students steadily improved as they progressed through their studies. Such improvements are a credit to the quality of the program and to its faculty. Two tangible elements of TREN that are recognized as strengths include: 1) the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre, and 2) international study abroad opportunities. The Centre is recognized for fostering an enviable research ethic, high productivity, significant profile, and for its potential to house a graduate program. Despite concerns about financial constraints and staffing implications, study abroad programs to Thailand, New Zealand and Croatia are recognized as exemplary opportunities for experiential learning and as strong recruitment tools. In addition to the standard range of information resources available to support the program through the University of Brock's library system, it is apparent that the library has taken an active role in the delivery of TREN curriculum through library staff involvement in exercises such as a Google mapping assignment. The Department and Library are lauded for these initiatives and are encouraged to continue to expand in this area (i.e. the Department needs to take further advantage of the opportunities the Library is offering them). From a geographic perspective, Brock's location in the Niagara region provides a significant competitive advantage for TREN. Finally, in terms of this review, the Department personnel recognized the significant issues that they face. The Department members demonstrate a deep self-awareness that bodes well for their capacity to successfully address these challenges.

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers provided 18 recommendations:

Positioning, Structure, & Governance

1. Reposition the unit to have a focus on "sustainability" rather than "environment."

In its response, the Department stated:

> We are in full agreement with changing the nomenclature of the program from "Environment" to "Sustainability". This was our suggestion. In this vein, we intend, as outlined in item two, to establish a degree in Sustainable Tourism Management, and as discussed in item three, establish a degree in Sustainability Studies. For this, we hope to work with other units, but, as discussed in item three, we think that these links should initially be with units from the Social Sciences, rather than the Natural Sciences.

The Dean agreed with the Department response.

In its subsequent Addendum the Department explained that after due consideration, it will not be pursuing a Degree in Sustainability Studies (see recommendation #3). At the ARC meeting of Nov. 13, 2013, the Dean agreed with the suggestion in the Addendum.

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

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences, Dean of Goodman School of Business
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14

2.	Refocus the curriculum by establishing a degree in Sustainable Tourism Management (STM).

The Department responded:

> We are fully committed to building a new degree in Sustainable Tourism Management, as outlined in Sections 2 and 10 of the Report, and we will explore the possibility of collaboration with the Business School for foundational businesses courses.

The Dean stated:

> I agree with the Department's response. I note that this will require cooperation with the Goodman School of Business.

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in development.

Implementation Plan (1ˢᵗ Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Goodman School of Business
Responsible for resources:	Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Goodman School of Business
Responsible for implementation:	Department, Deans of Social Sciences and Goodman School of Business
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14

3.	Construct and lead a Degree in Sustainability Studies.

In its response, the Department stated:

> Our Self Study suggested that we establish a degree in Sustainability Studies, and as discussed in item 11 below, we plan to do so. We believe that a degree that focuses on the Social Sciences is more feasible than one that utilises Natural Science courses. Though collaboration with the Natural Sciences is desirable, previous experience of the Centre for the Environment shows that numerous administrative and academic challenges must be overcome to make it work effectively.

The Dean responded:

> I do not agree with this recommendation or the Department response. At this point, TREN does not have the resources to sustain a second degree and the reality is that in the short to mid-term such resources will not be available. My preference would be for the Department to focus on developing a viable program in Sustainable Tourism Management. Even if, as the Department suggests, it focused solely on cooperation with other units in Social Sciences to develop a second degree, this would require resources that FOSS cannot provide.

The Undergraduate Program Committee stated:

> Some concerns were expressed whether there were sufficient resources to add two new degrees (Sustainable Tourism Management degree (p.10) and Sustainability Studies degree (p.11)), however, if the existing degrees were replaced with these two 'new' degrees, then this should not be an issue.

In its Addendum (dated Oct. 21, 2013) the Department stated that, "Based on the current economic realities at Brock and after discussions with Dean Makus and several other administrative and academic units", it has decided to make a number of changes to the program. The Department has decided that it will not pursue a degree in Sustainability Studies.

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation NOT accepted.

4.	Develop strategic, operational and marketing/recruitment plans to support the new degrees.

The Department stated:

> The two new degrees proposed will involve far more than just reorganising existing courses. We will build the new program by assessing the optimal structure for the programs, and establishing new courses that best suit the new programs. The new degrees in Sustainable Tourism Management and in Sustainability Studies will then need careful marketing and well-developed recruitment strategies.

The Dean stated:

> I agree with the Departmental response with regard to the proposed degree in Sustainable Tourism Management (STM henceforth), but not with the Departmental response pertaining to the proposed degree in Sustainability Studies, for the reasons cited in 3.

In its Addendum the Department explained that after due consideration, it will not be pursuing a Degree in Sustainability Studies (see recommendation #3).

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted with respect to the degree in Sustainable Tourism Management.

Implementation Plan (1ˢᵗ Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for implementation:	Department, Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14

5.	Assume a more active role in Faculty and University governance.

In its response, the Department stated:

> We accept that members of the Department should become more involved in the governance structure of the University.

The Dean stated:

> I agree with the recommendation and the Departmental response, and look forward to more participation from members of TREN in the governance structures of the university.

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside the jurisdiction of the Committee and has implications with respect to the Brock University/Faculty Association Collective Agreement.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation NOT accepted.

6.	Develop additional internal governance and collaborative frameworks that engage a broader spectrum of stakeholders.

The Department stated:

Several courses currently engage extensively with local municipalities and the Regional Government. We can work to expand these contacts. Internally, we can seek a fourth year student to add to the Department Committee.

The Dean agreed with the Department response.

ARC considers the recommendation to "develop additional internal governance" to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction and has implications with respect to the Brock University/Faculty Association Collective Agreement. ARC considers the recommendation to develop "collaborative frameworks that engage a broader spectrum of stakeholders" to be worthy of consideration and expects that the Department is best-positioned to determine strategies to move forward on this issue.

Implementation Plan (1ˢᵗ 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

Staffing

7.   Fill the pending retirement by hiring an Assistant Professor in the area of tourism management to support the proposed sustainable tourism management degree.

The Department responded:

> To facilitate the development of the two programs we will need to replace the two faculty members lost to the Department recently [names withheld]. One appointment will, as the Reviewers suggest, be in the area of Sustainable Tourism Management, and the other, to follow as soon as possible, in the area of Sustainability Studies.

The Dean stated that:

> The Dean will continue to press the Administration for a more equitable and rational distribution of resources within the University. However, given the current financial realities and enrolment pressures across the Faculty, this recommendation cannot be implemented. By various measures used within the Faculty of Social Sciences, TREN is not a priority for Faculty replacements.

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee expects that the Department is best-positioned to determine its priorities in terms of faculty resources for the program and will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these resources.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation NOT accepted.

8.	Increase the proportion of courses taught by tenure track faculty members.

The Department stated:

> We agree that we should seek to increase the number of courses taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty members. The replacement faculty sought for the two new programs will help alleviate this imbalance.

The Faculty Dean stated:

> I agree with the recommendation and the Department's response in the sense that I believe that ideally all courses should be taught by full-time faculty. TREN does currently have one ILTA. However, within FOSS, TREN is the unit that is least reliant on non-BUFA or BUFA overload teaching compared to other units. The Department also can look at how it deploys its tenured faculty members' workload, in keeping with Collective Agreement provisions on NDWS's and ADWS's.

ARC recognizes that hiring and deployment lie outside of its jurisdiction but also that there is more than one pathway available to address this recommendation. Therefore ARC considers this recommendation to be worthy of consideration and expects that the Department is best-positioned to determine strategies to move forward on this issue. The Committee acknowledges that the Department is exploring all options to address this recommendation, including reviewing the curriculum to better align tenured faculty resources to the delivery of the program.

Implementation Plan (1st 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

9. Establish a practicum/co-op supervisor position.

The Department stated:

> We agree that we should add an internship/ practicum/co-op component to the program. The reviewers recommend that this be an additional resource for the Department. It may be possible that this can be done by Brock's co-op office. We will also work with Brock's Mentorship Plus program.

The Faculty Dean stated:

> I agree with the Department's response. Ideally this will be a component of a new program in Strategic Tourism Management

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation NOT accepted.

Teaching/Curricula

10. The curriculum for the proposed Tourism Management Degree requires an expanded core, a limited number of structured concentrations, courses offered on a regular basis, and clear articulation with Brock University's competitive advantages.
    a. Expanded core curriculum focused on tourism (introductory course, research course, etc.), management (foundation course offered by TREN, complementary courses offered by Business), and sustainability courses.
    b. Offer a limited number of patterns/concentrations that are consistently supported by relevant courses.
        i. e.g., sustainable tourism planning and development
        ii. e.g., food and wine tourism (collaboration with CCOVI)
    b. Build on the experiential components of the degree by incorporating:
        i. A co-op, practicum (i.e., credit), or internship component (partner with regional tourism industry)
        ii. A modified less resource intensive international study abroad/exchange experience (e.g. blend of study abroad and exchange)
        iii. Regional field based courses/assignments integrated throughout the curriculum.

The Department stated:

The new Sustainable Tourism Management degree will concentrate on:
a) an expanded core curriculum focused on tourism, management and sustainability courses.
b) Possible concentrations supported by relevant courses, building on the experiential components of the degree as suggested by the reviewers.

The Dean responded:

I disagree with this recommendation and the Department response, at least as they are currently stated. It is unclear what an "expanded core curriculum" means. The new degree would require restructuring the existing core curriculum, not simply expanding it. Given the current enrolment realities my suggestion would be that the new program be designed around an assumed complement of 5.5 full-time faculty members (the current number of full-time faculty members given the retirement of [name withheld] on as of June 30, 2013)

The Undergraduate Program Committee stated:

Members of the UPC felt it is important for the department to address the concerns expressed by students regarding redundancy and focus of the program. More specifically, as stated in the review, "*There are redundancies in learning outcomes and vehicles for*

learning - the students were vocal in this regard. The students also noted their expectations to focus more on the ecological aspects of the environment were not met" (p. 2).

ARC considers the recommendation to conduct a curriculum review to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee recognizes that the Department is best-positioned to determine the overall direction as well as specific components of the program.

Implementation Plan (1st 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

11. We propose a Degree in Sustainability Studies. If a degree is offered, the new unit, Faculty, and University will have to decide on a path – it probably cannot do both of the options below though a hybrid third-way might be possible. The assessors offer two options as a start:

   a. This degree could grow from the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre. In this case, there would be more of a biophysical focus, though not exclusively so.   The core would be comprised of courses drawn from Sustainable Tourism Management, Biological Sciences, Earth Sciences, Geography, and Business.   The risk here is that not all units may want to cooperate (though the Centre's existence may lessen that issue) and it could have a tough time competing against similar programs in other Universities. Nonetheless, it is a logical fit with the Centre's research mission and would give Sustainable Tourism Management an audience that differs from its own core - but still attracts students who's expectations can be met. Dr.[Name withheld] is a clear leader here but since he is mainly doing research, it would probably fall to Drs. [names withheld] to lead any undergraduate degree with this focus.
   b. A more conservative approach might be to focus on sustainability within the social dimension.   Here is where there would be collaboration mainly with Economics, Geography, Business, Women's and Gender Studies, Communication, Popular Culture and Film, Political Science, and Sociology. Drs. [names withheld] could lead this. Dr. [name withheld] is quite capable as well but she would be best leading in student engagement foci and business linkages.

The Department responded:

   a. Though desirable, we don't view a degree in Sustainability Studies in collaboration with Natural Sciences as feasible. The preceding Centre for the Environment tried this, and the programs were not successful, due the large framework of pre-requisite courses for the science components.
   b. We will build a degree in Sustainability Studies as outlined in the Review section 11 b. Building this degree will require close collaboration with other departments, primarily in the Social Sciences

The Dean stated:

As noted above I disagree with the creation of a new second degree at this time.

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation NOT accepted.

12.	The courses offered by TREN should be made more accessible to students from other programs by minimizing pre-requisites where possible.

The Department stated:

Currently all of our second and third-year courses have only our first-year course as a pre-requisite, and they also allow for the Instructor to give permission to non-TREN students. For our own students we need to maintain the first-year prerequisite, but we frequently waive it for non-TREN students.

The Dean agreed with the Department response.

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

Implementation Plan (1st 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

13.	Articulated transfer agreements should be explored with Niagara College and similar institutions elsewhere and abroad (e.g., Caribbean countries).

The Department stated that it:

would like to build linkages with Colleges and industry, both locally and internationally. We are currently finalizing an agreement with the University of Florida that would involve Brock students spending a term in their third year at the University of Florida, and interning with Disney.

The Dean agreed with the Department's response.

ARC considers the recommendation to explore articulation agreements to be accepted and in the process of development.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department, Dean, Provost
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14

Student Engagement

14. There is a need to revisit the program's student recruitment strategy.

The Department stated that, "We will widen the faculty resources committed to recruitment."

The Dean responded:

> I am unclear exactly what the Department response means but will work with them to explore ways of improving recruitment. I want to note here the impressive dedication of [the Chair] to recruitment efforts.

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

Implementation Plan (1st 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

15. Develop more vehicles and opportunities for student and alumni engagement.

The Department responded:

> We have tried to foster a student club for some years, but numbers and student enthusiasm have been insufficient. As numbers increase, we will try again.

The Dean stated:

> I agree with the recommendation. I note the Department response and would suggest that a focus on a program in STM may make it easier to develop a student society or club.

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

Implementation Plan (2nd 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

16. Review the state of academic advising at the Faculty level.

The Department stated:

> The advising for the Unit consists primarily of support from the Office of the Dean of FOSS, supplemented by the Chair. A dedicated in-house program advisor will be needed once the two new programs are running.

The Dean stated:

> I agree with the recommendation for providing additional in-house advising for the one new program (STM).

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for resources:	Dean of Social Sciences
Responsible for implementation:	Dean of Social Sciences
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by end of academic year 2013/14

17. The faculty and students need proper dedicated space.

The Department responded:

> The Department needs the main office in its physical space, temporarily loaned to Social Justice and Equity Studies several years ago.

The Faculty Dean stated:

> I agree with the recommendation. The Department's generosity was not misplaced. It served a very legitimate purpose. Once the renovations to Walker Complex are complete the SJES graduate students will be moving to that space and the space within TREN will be available.

ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted as it lies outside of the Committee's jurisdiction.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation NOT accepted.

18.	There needs to be support from the University and Faculty to market the new unit and degrees(s).

The Department responded by saying:

> Marketing will be critical and we will work with Recruitment staff and the FOSS Dean's office to improve our current strategies.

The Dean agreed with the recommendation and the Department response.

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

Implementation Plan (1st 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

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 1,2,4,6,8,10,12,14,16,18.

Second Priority
   Recommendation 13, 15

E. Recommendations that Will Not be Implemented

   Recommendations 3,5,7,9,11,17.