

**Academic Unit Review Report
for
La Cité universitaire francophone (La Cité)
University of Regina**

June 17, 2024

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Note:

The original report was written in French. This version was translated using AI translation tools, including Chat GPT and Google Gemini AI with revision by La Cité's team.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BAEFI Bachelor of Arts in Francophone and Intercultural Studies

CFLS Certificate in French as a Second Language

CRFM Canadian Centre for Research on Francophone Minorities

RALC La Cité's Self-Assessment Report (Rapport d'autoévaluation de La Cité)

1. SUMMARY

In the spring of 2024, La Cité universitaire francophone (La Cité) underwent its first evaluation in line with the Academic Unit Review Policy of the University of Regina. The evaluation team, mandated by Professor Nilgün Önder, Associate Vice-President (Academic), included Professors Frédéric Boily, Campus Saint-Jean, University of Alberta (external member), Émir Delic, Université Sainte-Anne (external member), and Marc Spooner, University of Regina (internal member). Drawing on La Cité's self-assessment report, various institutional documents outlining strategic directions, statistical and financial data from the University of Regina, and an on-site visit conducted on March 13 and 14, 2024, this team conducted a thorough analysis of La Cité's operations.

In many respects, La Cité is a unique academic unit. With its dual mandate of education and community engagement, it is both integrated into the broader activities of teaching and research conducted at the University of Regina and plays a crucial role in fostering the vitality of the Francophone community on campus and throughout the province of Saskatchewan. La Cité has held this dual mandate for only nine years, having been created in 2015 through the merger of the *Institut français* and the Department of French and Francophone Intercultural Studies. Thus, La Cité, as we know it today, is relatively young and still evolving.

There is no doubt that since its inception, La Cité has made a significant contribution to the teaching, research, and community services offered in French at the University of Regina and throughout Saskatchewan. However, it faces considerable challenges that threaten its ability to fulfill its mission. It is fair to say that La Cité is at a pivotal moment in its existence, as this evaluation exercise will not only assess its strengths and weaknesses but also highlight possible future directions that could benefit its mission.

This report aims to contribute to this evaluation exercise in two complementary ways: first, by highlighting the main issues identified by the three members of the evaluation team from the various sources of documentation and information consulted; and second, by making several recommendations that could serve as starting point for consolidating La Cité's achievements and ensuring that it thrives over the next decade in the interest of the entire Fransaskois community.

2. PREAMBLE

We undertook this first in-depth study of La Cité's operations with great interest. In preparation for our on-site visit, conducted on March 13 and 14, 2024, we received several useful documents. Easily accessible through a webpage¹, these included the Academic Unit Review

¹ Université de Regina, « Academic Unit Reviews : La Cité universitaire francophone », <https://www.uregina.ca/president/executive-team/provost-vp-academic/academic-unit-reviews/2023-24_AURS/La-Cite.html> (accessed on April 20, 2024).

Policy², the Self-Assessment Report of La Cité (RALC)³, the University of Regina’s 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, the University of Regina’s 2023-2026 Academic Strategic Plan, various annual and budget reports, as well as statistical tables on enrollment and graduation related to La Cité’s programs and courses.

During the visit, we met with many members of La Cité’s administrative teams, the University, and other academic units collaborating with La Cité.

La Cité’s Administration (In alphabetical order)	University and Other Academic Units’ Administration (In alphabetical order)
Emmanuel Aito, Ph.D. Dean	Fadila Boutouchent, Ph.D. Director, French Bachelor of Education Program (Le Bac)
Michael Akinpelu, Ph.D. Graduate Studies Coordinator	Shannon Dea, Ph.D. Dean, Faculty of Arts
Alpha Barry, C.I.M. Director of Operations and Strategies	Isabelle Dostaler, Ph.D. Provost and Vice-President, Academic
Sophie Gaudet, Ph.D. Associate Dean, Studies and Research	Aziz Douai, Ph.D. Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Chidi Igwe, Ph.D. Manager, Communications and Marketing	Nilgün Önder, Ph.D. Associate Vice-President, Academic
Michael Poplyansky, Ph.D. Head, Francophone and Intercultural Studies Program	Cheryl Pollard, Ph.D. Dean, Faculty of Nursing

Two scheduled meetings could not take place: the one with Professor David Dick, Dean of the Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance, who, however, provided us with his views in writing regarding current and potential collaborations with La Cité; and the one with Professor Christopher Yost, Vice-President, Research, who was replaced by Professor Andrea Sterzuk, Associate Vice-President, Research, during the initial interview. In addition to the documents provided, our discussions with these individuals holding administrative positions helped us in capturing a picture of La Cité in which everyone acknowledges the vital importance of this institution.

Moreover, other stakeholders we met provided us with a better understanding of La Cité’s relationships and contributions to the University as a whole and the Fransaskois community:

- Courtney Oleksinski, Manager, International Recruitment and Outreach

² University of Regina, Academic Unit Review Policy, June 13, 2023.

<<https://www.uregina.ca/policy/browsepolicy/policy-OPS-130-005.html>> (accessed on April 20, 2024).

³ La Cité universitaire francophone, « Self-Assessment Report », 31 janvier 2024,

<https://www.uregina.ca/president/assets/docs/PVPA%20docs/Council%20Committee%20on%20Academic%20Mission/academic%20unit%20reviews/2023-24/la_cite/self-study.pdf> (accessed on April 20, 2024).

- Veronica Ramshaw, Liaison Librarian, Archer Library
- William Sgrazzutti, Associate Dean, Archer Library
- Yaya Siggins, Director, UR International
- Denis Simard, President, Assemblée communautaire francosaskoise.

Additionally, we had the opportunity to engage in discussions with regular faculty members, sessional instructors, as well as undergraduate and graduate students. These collective consultations, although brief, were highly informative about the daily experiences of each group within La Cité.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all the individuals we met for their time and their willingness to share their perspectives with us, which greatly contributed to our understanding of La Cité's initiatives and its role at the University of Regina and within the community.

Our review of La Cité's operations is based on the comprehensive qualitative and quantitative information thereby collected. We also wish to emphasize that the evaluation of an institution like La Cité must consider not only the framework defined by institutional policies but also the peculiar nature of this small-sized academic unit serving the interest of a minority Francophone community within an Anglo-dominant environment. This context involves specific realities, constraints, and opportunities that are distinct from those of larger academic units—whether designated as a “Faculty,” “School,” or “Center”—and which are sometimes misunderstood, not well understood, or even invisible to the majority.

The remainder of this report presents the results of our review, which is divided into six major sections: Vision and Priorities; Teaching; Research; Service; Administration and Resources; and Sustainability.

Each section or subsection of the report, starting with the current one, outlines its related key points and concludes, where appropriate, with relevant recommendations. A list of recommendations is also provided at the end of the document.

Recommendations:

- a) Add captions to the institutional statistics tables provided to the evaluation teams to clarify the abbreviations used.*
- b) Allocate more time to meet with teaching staff and students. Since these were group meetings, we barely had time to discuss with some individuals due to the time slots being the same as when we met with one person or five.*

3. VISION AND PRIORITIES

La Cité aims to be "the hub for academic programs, research, and services offered in French at the University of Regina and across the province" (RALC, p. 2). It must be acknowledged from the outset that achieving this institutional vision, which is based on both an educational and community mandate, presents a constant and general challenge. This is especially true given

that each area of focus encompasses multiple facets: teaching includes both university curricula and various continuing education opportunities; research must not only be fundamental but also applied, with action research being central to the future of minority Francophone communities in Canada; and community services—whether linguistic, socio-cultural, or otherwise—are aimed at the university community, the general public, and the Fransaskois community alike. This presents a challenge, but also an opportunity to surpass expectations, get challenged, and innovate.

To achieve its institutional vision, La Cité has established five axes of strategic priority:

- i. Recruitment and retention;
- ii. Student success and experience;
- iii. Impactful teaching and learning;
- iv. Innovative and diversified study programs and research;
- v. Effective leadership and management. (RALC, p. 2, 23-25)

The first four axes align with those of the University of Regina's 2023-2026 Academic Plan, with the difference being that the fourth axis combines the "research" component with the "teaching" component of the plan, which rightly indicates that these two are interconnected. The fifth axis represents an addition that is all the more appropriate as it directly relates to La Cité's ability to act effectively in the areas of teaching, research, and services and, therefore, to implement its vision.

From the discussion below regarding these three areas of intervention of La Cité, it will become clear that each of the five strategic axes presents both challenges and opportunities. It will also be emphasized that the final axis, concerning effective leadership and management, deserves special attention due to its fundamental importance; hence, the separate section that will be dedicated to it.

4. TEACHING

The structure of the programs offered by La Cité is somewhat unique and even puzzling at first glance. In addition to the university courses and programs (credited), some of which are entirely under its jurisdiction while others are offered jointly with other academic units, it provides a wide range of continuing education opportunities (non-credited).

4.1. University Programs

4.1.1. La Cité's Programs

La Cité offers a variety of relevant university programs in the field of Francophone and intercultural studies, whether they lead to a diploma or a certificate, and whether they are undergraduate or graduate programs. The total number of enrollments in programs fully offered by La Cité has remained relatively stable. In 2014, there were 43 enrollments, as is still the case in 2023. However, the composition of the student population has changed over the

decade, with a decrease in undergraduate enrollments and an increase in graduate enrollments.

Specifically, two undergraduate programs have attracted the most students, the main one being the Bachelor of Arts in Francophone and Intercultural Studies (BAEFI). This is a 4-year program of 120 credits with one or two majors. The Certificate in French as a Second Language (CFLS), consisting of 30 credits, is another particularly attractive program. However, it should be noted that current enrollments in these programs are modest. In 2015, the take-off year, there were 14 enrollments in the BAEFI and 14 in the CFLS, making a total of 28 students. In 2023, there were only 7 students remaining in these programs (5 in the BAEFI and 2 in the CFLS). It should be noted that this decline reflects, partially, at least, the decreasing interest in literary and language studies that has been emerging over the past decade in Canadian universities as a whole.

It should be noted that the low number of undergraduate enrollments is a sharp contrast to the increase in graduate enrollments. The number of people that La Cité has managed to recruit for the Master of Arts in Francophone and Intercultural Studies is impressive, particularly in terms of international students. This program grew from 5 enrollments in 2015 to 24 in 2023. The doctoral program in Francophone and Intercultural Studies, which is still evolving, currently has 3 students. In total, the graduate programs currently have 29 students, 19 of whom are from outside Canada and 10 from Canada, representing an average ratio of 2 to 1. We have observed that the recruitment process, at least for the students we met, seems to rely on word of mouth, the networks of the faculty, and the specializations of two professors who are supervising a large number of students. While the dedication of these professors is commendable, this trend appears unsustainable in the long term. Indeed, while it is important not to hinder the progress made by the master's and doctoral programs in recent years, including the establishment of corresponding administrative structures, it will henceforth be necessary to manage admissions to these programs based on La Cité's capacity to accommodate students.

This seems all the more necessary since the students at all levels of study to whom we spoke expressed great satisfaction with the programs and the teaching provided by the institution. In fact, both the documents we consulted and our visit to the premises show that La Cité offers a stimulating intellectual and academic learning environment. The usefulness of the teachings and the quality of the teaching staff are therefore two major strengths of La Cité, which is particularly important in the context of a small unit.

While the intrinsic quality of La Cité's programs should be applauded, the number of enrollments in several programs poses some challenges.

The decline in enrollments in undergraduate programs mentioned earlier is concerning and should prompt a thorough reflection on the sustainability of the bachelor's and certificate programs. Should these programs be maintained or revised, and if so, how? This is an important reflection that must be carried out both from an academic perspective and from a recruitment point of view. These two dimensions are, in fact, two sides of the same coin. The

fundamental question to ask is: Are the full potential of Francophone and Francophile students (including those from immersion programs) being maximized?

The proposed Bachelor of Arts in French as a Second Language, which will be launched in the fall 2024 term, seems promising, but it must be done in conjunction with the thorough reflection mentioned earlier. Moreover, the success of the master's program should not overshadow the fact that, for a faculty of only a few individuals, the number of students being supervised is too high, even when divided equally among the current professors. Thus, what is currently a success for La Cité could turn into a pitfall. This growth will therefore need to be carefully planned to avoid failures. This is why the next hiring of a professor must take into account the current strength of the master's program and the fields of study that students seem to prefer or prioritize. Notably, several of them mentioned translation as an area of interest. A position opening in this field would therefore be relevant, especially since a researcher in translation would be able to contribute to the interdisciplinarity of university courses and other potential training initiatives at La Cité (e.g., micro-certifications).

In any case, La Cité's administration and academic staff, in conjunction with the university's top management, should agree to clearly define the next job opening, which we consider necessary for the maintenance and growth of the graduate programs, and which would increase the number of professors to five.

Finally, we cannot overlook the fact that some students have expressed a desire for a more specific designation on their diploma to clearly indicate their area of specialization in their master's degree (e.g., literature, linguistics, etc.).

Recommendations

- a) *Conduct a thorough review of the structure of La Cité's various undergraduate programs to fully harness the potential of Francophone and Francophile students.*
- b) *Create a new faculty position, ideally specializing in translation, to both ensure the sustainability and attractiveness of graduate programs and to build institutional expertise in a versatile field.*
- c) *Explore the possibility of adding an option designation (specialization) to the Master's and PhD in Francophone and Intercultural Studies programs.*

4.1.2. La Cité's Joint Programs

La Cité plays an essential role in delivering several programs offered jointly with other academic units at the University of Regina (notably the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Education, and the Faculty of Nursing) or other Canadian post-secondary institutions. Among these programs, which meet various needs of the Francophone community and the labour market, are the Bachelor of Education in French (jointly or otherwise with the BAEFI); the Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Bilingual Option; the Minor in African Studies; the integrated pathway of the BAEFI and the Juris Doctor; and the Master of Education in French.

The Bachelor of Education in French (Le Bac) enjoys an excellent reputation, with one of its recognized strengths being the integration of an internship at Université Laval, a practice dating back to the 1980s. Moreover, the program director noted that students in the Bachelor of Education in French constitute an excellent subgroup within the larger student body of the Faculty of Education, benefiting from a cohort effect. Over the past three years, enrollment in this program has exceeded 20 students (26, 22, and 23, respectively). Given that, according to La Cité's management team, it offers nearly half of the courses for this program, it is surprising that there is no "formal process" (RALC, p. 27) for coordinating class schedules between the Faculty of Education and La Cité that takes into account students' pathways. Such a process should be developed, as it would prevent the often time-consuming management of schedule conflicts on a case-by-case basis.

Like the Bachelor of Education in French, the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Bilingual Option), launched in 2018, aims to address an acute shortage in a professional sector. According to the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, this program attracted fewer than five applications in recent years but has seen an increase to 15 applications this year.

It is important to note that these two programs could not be offered without the active administrative and academic support provided by La Cité⁴. This support extends to entering into agreements with other faculties so that courses from those faculties, which are required in the two programs, are offered in French with financial support provided by La Cité. Moreover, as highlighted by several stakeholders that were consulted, the students involved feel a sense of belonging to La Cité; it provides them with a "home." However, it seems that the students in the Bachelor of Education in French and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Bilingual Option), are not counted, even partially, in the student figures of La Cité. This has harmful effects on several levels, including on the sense of community being promoted by La Cité. As evidence, more than one staff member lamented: "They are not our students." To address this, it would be wise to find a way to better recognize the essentially joint nature of these programs and the primary role that La Cité plays in offering them.

Recommendations:

- a) Develop a formal process for coordinating course schedules between La Cité and the Faculty of Education regarding the Bachelor of Education in French program.*
- b) Give better recognition to the essentially joint nature of several of La Cité's programs and its primary responsibility in offering them.*

4.1.3. La Cité's Service Teaching

⁴ This is undoubtedly also the case for the Master's in French Education, which, oddly enough, is not mentioned anywhere in the RALC. Yet it is prominently advertised on La Cité's website: <https://lacite.uregina.ca/fr/med> (accessed on June 7, 2024).

The service teaching that La Cité provides to other university programs serves a strategic function. This function is recognized by other faculties, particularly the Faculty of Arts, whose curricula require the completion of at least two courses in a language other than English. As a result, numerous students at the University of Regina enroll each year in the introductory courses FRN 100 (Discovery I), FRN 101 (Discovery II), and FRN 110 (Discovery [I+II], a 6-credit spring course).

Regarding this service teaching, two points should be noted. First, it should be distinguished from the joint programs that La Cité offers in collaboration with other academic units, as these programs exist based on an equal contribution from each party. Second, the service teaching provided by La Cité goes beyond the usual academic aims of this type of teaching. Certainly, it serves to fulfill the requirements of a course of study, but at the same time, it also serves to fulfill La Cité's community mandate of promoting the language of Molière and Francophone culture. This dual objective that is peculiar to La Cité's service teaching is certainly one of its strengths.

For this reason, it should be further leveraged by enriching the offering of courses taught in French through new intra-institutional collaborations. Here, we are thinking specifically of the Faculty of Media, Art, and Performance, whose dean would like to see stronger ties between his faculty and La Cité, for example, through the teaching of music in French.

Recommendations:

- a) *Make a distinction between the service teaching provided by La Cité and its joint academic programs.*
- b) *Enrich the offering of courses taught in French in other academic units through new intra-institutional collaborations.*

4.2. Continuing Education

Our initial impression, as noted earlier, of the unique, even confusing, nature of La Cité's programs largely stems from the fragmented aspect of continuing education. By this, we mean all non-credit training opportunities, whether customized or not, ranging from French language enhancement opportunities to professional or personal development opportunities focused on specific skills. Indeed, continuing education, whether aimed at individuals or organizations, is a preferred channel of community engagement in a Francophone minority setting.

It is, therefore, not surprising that La Cité is already making notable efforts in the field of continuing education, as illustrated by the initiatives listed in the RALC (pp. 11-13) and on its website. However, this sector of activity seems to lack a coherent vision, which hinders its growth. To fully exploit the potential of continuing education, it would be essential to develop a concrete strategic plan for the short, medium, and long term. To this end, we suggest assigning the leadership of continuing education to a designated person. This person would perform a function similar to that of the director of academic programs at La Cité.

Recommendation:

- a) *Assign the leadership of continuing education to a designated person with the mandate to implement it according to a strategic plan.*

5. RESEARCH

5.1. Research Areas of the Faculty

The faculty of La Cité is effectively fulfilling its research mission. Individually, La Cité's researchers are active and have numerous works to their credit across various fields. Certainly, some are very active, while others are slightly less so, but considering their teaching and service loads, it would be difficult to ask them for more.

At the same time, the faculty members are mindful of their community environment, as evidenced by their efforts to develop research connected to their milieu, research that goes beyond their primary areas of specialization (e.g., Merleau-Ponty, Acadia, language policy in Nigeria, literary theory, etc.). It is often a challenging exercise to reconcile one's primary research interests with those of the institution and the community in which one operates, but in this case, the right balance has been struck. This is an undeniable strength of the academic unit.

Professors who are actively engaged in research also teach an impressive variety of courses, closely or loosely related to their fields of expertise, which is also characteristic of small Francophone units. This requires great versatility and a willingness to adapt, demands that often impede the recruitment of professors. Certainly, it is important to continue supporting this versatility in research and to consider it in future job competitions.

It should be noted that, during our on-site visit, we learned that the only professor specializing in literary studies would be retiring in June 2024. To ensure the interdisciplinary nature of La Cité's research and teaching programs, it is essential to fill this tenured position in literature.

Recommendation:

- a) *Fill the tenured position in literature after the current professor retires.*

5.2. Canadian Centre for Research on Francophones in Minority Contexts (CRFM)

La Cité is home to a research center, the Canadian Centre for Research on Francophone Minorities (CRFM). Since its founding in 2005, the CRFM has made significant research contributions (project grants, colloquiums, conferences, publications, etc.), thus fulfilling its mandate "to analyze the experience of a specific Francophone community (the Fransaskois community) and to relate this analysis to that of other Francophone communities and other

minority groups in Canada and around the world⁵." However, there has been a significant slowdown in its activities since 2019, when funding from Canadian Heritage for research ended. This period also coincides with the abolition of the CRFM's director position. More recently, in October 2023, thanks to new federal funding, La Cité hired a research coordinator responsible for supporting the research and partnership activities of the CRFM while working on continuing education projects.

In principle, the CRFM is an asset for La Cité and the University of Regina. Moreover, it should clearly play an influential role within the research community as well as within the Francophone community in Saskatchewan and more broadly in Canada as a whole. Unfortunately, the potential of this research center is currently being underutilized.

In our view, an important issue affecting the CRFM seems to be about its leadership which should be entrusted to a recognized scholar in the field of studies on Francophone minorities. As it stands, its administrative structure corresponds more to a purely operational structure, whereas the CRFM should be an academic research center aligned with its mission. The hiring of a coordinator in October 2023 is a promising step, but action is needed at another level to revitalize and energize this research center, which offers many development opportunities.

Given these circumstances, a fundamental reflection on the future of the CRFM is necessary: should its operational structure be changed? Should its focus be reviewed to include, for example, a more explicit dimension regarding relations between Francophones and Indigenous peoples, a dimension that is already part of the works of some professors? Should different research axes be considered from those adopted in 2017? Could a regional, national, and international research network on Francophone minority studies be established at the CRFM? What synergies can be created between the works of the CRFM, the academic programs, and the continuing education unit of La Cité while pursuing the different mandates of these sectors? These are some fundamental questions to explore in order to collaboratively develop a strategic plan for the CRFM.

Recommendations:

- b) *Restore the position of CRFM's Director and assign it to a scholar specializing in the field of Francophone minorities studies.*
- c) *Conduct a comprehensive think-tank to collaboratively develop a strategic plan for the CRFM.*

⁵ La Cité, « Constitution du Centre canadien de recherche sur les francophonies en milieu minoritaire », <<https://lacite.uregina.ca/sites/default/files/2024-02/crfm-constitution-2017.pdf>> (accessed on March 27, 2024).

6. SERVICES

In addition to the services offered to the community through various continuing education opportunities already mentioned, La Cité offers a plethora of other internal and external services aimed at promoting the development of the Fransaskois community.

6.1. Services Provided by Staff

The tenured faculty members are actively engaged as far as service is concerned: they perform various administrative tasks (such as course and program coordination) and serve on various committees at La Cité and the University of Regina. Since faculty members in small-sized units are often overburdened with internal service workload, the participation of several professors from La Cité in external services—whether in community associations, professional organizations, or government agencies—is remarkable.

Furthermore, our visit to La Cité revealed that many administrative staff members are also heavily involved in community associations and clubs.

6.2. Educational and Sociocultural Activities

In line with its mission to promote an environment for living and studying in French, La Cité has created several welcoming community gathering spaces, primarily *La Rotonde* and the Theater. Additionally, it organizes a wide variety of activities for educational or sociocultural engagement and makes its facilities and spaces available for such purposes. Lastly, when other Francophone organizations host community-based activities outside the university, La Cité endeavours to be well represented.

6.3. Student Services

La Cité has established various support services for its student population, addressing typical concerns or needs (scholarships, tutoring, mentoring, career guidance, locker rentals, course resources, academic advising, etc.).

Clearly, there is no denying the fact that these services are of great value. However, there should be more careful consideration of the selection of resources or services to be developed or offered exclusively by La Cité. It should not hesitate to draw on the expertise of other academic or administrative units at the University of Regina when possible. In this regard, one might find it surprising to see "course resources" listed on La Cité's website. Certainly, it is a useful page, but wouldn't it be more beneficial to work with the liaison librarian to create a more comprehensive library guide relevant to any French language program at La Cité? Not only would this approach relieve La Cité staff of this task, but it would also enhance intra-institutional collaborations in French, ultimately benefiting the delivery of high-quality services to students.

Recommendation:

a) *While providing student services, use the expertise of other academic or administrative units at the University of Regina whenever possible.*

6.4. Translation Service

La Cité offers an internal and external translation service with the aim of encouraging and promoting the use of the French language at the University of Regina and in Saskatchewan.

7. ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCES

As it is written in the RALC, "Since its inception, La Cité has been challenged to accomplish a coherent strategic and operational plan [...]" (p. 26). Despite La Cité's achievements over the past decade, this fundamental challenge persists. And it is acknowledged, in one way or another, by all the stakeholders we met. This is why it is important to examine the organization and administrative operations of La Cité and improve certain aspects. To this end, four issues related to the operations of La Cité, about which various questions and concerns were raised during our visit, should receive particular attention.

7.1. Organizational Structure

The organizational structure of La Cité is difficult to grasp, to the extent that it is sometimes hard to understand who reports to whom, why one person does not report to another, or why a particular position is assigned to a specific team. However, even though the operations of La Cité may have a complexity inherent to its mandate, this complexity should not prevent the establishment of a clear organizational structure that states the assignment of roles and the hierarchical relationships within the entire system. In academic units comparable in size to La Cité, which is led by a dean, there is usually a stratification by field of activity (area of study or service) and by level (vice-deanships or associate deanships, directorships, assistant directorships, coordinations, etc.). This allows for the assignment of specific roles and responsibilities to each management level while engaging the entire staff towards achieving the desired outcomes and, ultimately, fulfilling the assigned missions. It also allows for the quick identification of obstacles and overcoming them by leveraging the skills of the responsible team members. Finally, it provides strategic means to assess whether the resources committed are sufficient to achieve the desired results in the short, medium, and long term. In short, a clear organizational structure is essential to move from an institution's vision to its achievement through its operationalization. It is therefore imperative for La Cité to put one in place.

We believe that this imperative far outweighs the debate, mentioned by several stakeholders, about whether to designate La Cité as a faculty or as a "mere" administrative unit. In our opinion, this semantic debate seems sterile at the moment, especially since regularizing a "faculty" status could lead to more unforeseen disadvantages than the expected benefits.

Recommendation:

a) Provide La Cité with a clear organizational structure that is conducive to achieving its vision.

7.2. Human Resources

La Cité operates with a modest tenured faculty. According to the RALC, there are only four associate professors (one of whom will retire on June 30, 2024) and four instructors (three at level III and one at level II). Additionally, there are the Dean and the Associate Dean of Studies and Research, whose terms will end in 2027, but their contributions to research and teaching are limited due to their administrative roles. This means that La Cité relies heavily on a large number of sessional lecturers for courses and programs delivery. In 2023-2024, there were five sessional lecturers for university programs and ten for continuing education. Although the entire teaching staff operates at a high level of efficiency, we believe that the creation of a fifth professor position is essential, as we have already mentioned, to support the research requirements and supervision of graduate programs.

Out of the approximately fifteen people who make up the extended administrative team (managers and support staff), only three, apart from the Dean and the Associate Dean, occupy permanent positions: the Director of Strategies and Operations, the Executive Assistant to the Dean, and the Administrative Assistant. The rest of the team has fixed-term contracts, ranging from a few months to three years. It is clear that such a reliance on fixed-term contracts to run all of La Cité's operations hinders its development on several fronts. For example, there are reduced long-term planning capacities, resources dedicated to managing regular turnover in positions, and common recruitment difficulties in minority Francophone communities.

Nevertheless, all the staff members we had the opportunity to meet during our visit are dedicated and motivated to work for the advancement of the institution. They demonstrated their enthusiasm and willingness to promote the French language and Francophone culture in Saskatchewan. However, we feel that while this group is eager to contribute to the promotion of Francophone culture both academically and beyond the University, they also find it to be a commitment that can become burdensome without transparency in decision-making process for some, or without job security for others.

Recommendation:

a) Stabilize the administrative positions that, after a review of La Cité's organizational structure, are deemed to play a critical role in its operations.

7.3. Financial Resources

La Cité's total operational budget is less than 2.5 million dollars. It relies on two main sources: stable funding ("hard money") from the base allocation provided by the University of Regina, and variable funding ("soft money") from project grants, primarily from government agencies. Here, we must commend La Cité's exceptional ability to secure project grants. Moreover, it shares the benefits with several faculties at the University of Regina (through the offering of

courses and programs), the student population (through support services), and the Fransaskois community as a whole (through continuing education and socio-cultural activities).

What is unusual about La Cité's budget revenues is that the stable funding it receives only covers the salaries of the tenured faculty members. In other words, the variable funding accounts for more than half of its operational budget, including all administrative positions (RALC, p. 19). This budgetary imbalance should be gradually corrected so that administrative positions deemed essential for basic operations do not depend on variable funding. The RALC mentions a promising approach in this regard, which we endorse: increasing the base allocation from the University of Regina to include the unionized administrative positions at La Cité. Indeed, this budget adjustment could represent concrete, tangible recognition that the joint programs offered by La Cité, which enhance the reputation of the University of Regina, are not merely a "service" provided to the faculties that grant the degrees. We recognize that this could require some flexibility in budget allocation, especially since the University of Regina, like many other universities, uses the traditional line-item budget. However, given the specific nature of La Cité's operations, wouldn't they be tenable to test-running a budget by credits or activities? This question deserves to be looked into.

Furthermore, we must acknowledge that project grants will remain a significant source of revenue for Franco-Canadian minority communities and their institutions, with all the advantages and disadvantages that come with them. Therefore, La Cité should continue to diversify its funding sources and collaborate with the University of Regina and Fransaskois associations to lobby governments to secure as many funding opportunities as possible for the future.

Recommendation:

a) Increase the University of Regina's base budget allocation to include the unionized administrative positions of La Cité.

7.4. Consultative Leadership

La Cité's vision is worth reiterating: to be "the hub for university program, research, and services offered in French at the University of Regina and across the province" (RALC, p. 2). The image of a "hub" alone conveys how La Cité must function at a multi-sectoral interface and, consequently, requires a collaborative approach focused on the quality of internal and external relations. To this end, it requires consultative leadership that can not only rally people towards an inspiring vision but also foster the involvement and creativity of team members in transforming this vision into reality. Unfortunately, the testimonies of several stakeholders we met call into question the current nature of consultative leadership at La Cité.

For example, several faculty members we met expressed their disappointment with the lack of effective and clear communication between them and the dean's office. They reported feeling excluded from certain decisions or administrative procedures that have a direct impact on their work. They also wish, in accordance with the principle of collegial governance, to participate

more actively in the development of La Cité's strategic plans at the academic level. Similarly, we learned that communication channels between the dean's office and certain external stakeholders of La Cité, including members of the Fransaskois community, could be improved.

To turn the tide, it would be necessary, in the first instance, to make better use of La Cité's Advisory Council as a forum. "In the first instance," because other actions are required to correct this type of setback that is typical of institutions with complex structures. For example, it would also be necessary to develop consultation mechanisms or structures that allow members of La Cité, particularly faculty, to participate fully, as mentioned above, in strategic decisions-making process. It is difficult for us to identify precisely what needs to be done, but it is necessary to undertake a process of reflection and development of mechanisms to ensure more active participation by all and thereby uphold collegiate principles.

Recommendations:

- a) *Strengthen consultative leadership at La Cité.*
- b) *Develop mechanisms and structures for regular internal and external consultation.*

8. SUSTAINABILITY

La Cité occupies a special place both in the Fransaskois community and in the University of Regina ecosystem. Based on our overall review of its operations over the past nine years, it is clear to us that La Cité is a unit anchored in the University's broad strategic directions. The University's 2023-2026 academic plan, entitled "Go far, Together", emphasizes two major dimensions: reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples as well as equity, diversity, and inclusion. Yet, the very existence of La Cité stems from this need, as we mentioned in the introduction, to reflect the diversity of Saskatchewan and its peculiar language and cultural community.

Regarding the University of Regina, La Cité is a piece that fits perfectly with President Jeff Keshen's goal that universities should not be isolated "ivory towers" but rather in tune with the wider community⁶. It also aligns with the commitments of the provincial government, which has once again "committed to fulfill its constitutional obligations"⁷ to the Francophone community by supporting the creation of new French-language schools in the province. In other words, the context seems favourable for La Cité to continue to grow, adapt, and play a key role in expressing diversity and promoting the Saskatchewan Francophone community.

In a way, *La Rotonde* symbolizes this integration of La Cité into the University as a whole, as it is a warm meeting place for the student community, the university community, and the Fransaskois community. Moreover, during our visit, we had the pleasure of witnessing right

⁶ Jeff Keshen, « Universities are not confined to "ivory towers." They are shaping our province », *National Post*, September 4, 2022, <<https://leaderpost.com/opinion/jeff-keshen-universities-are-not-confined-to-ivory-towers-theyare-shaping-our-province>> (page consultée le 7 juin 2024).

⁷ Garo Jomoain, « Construction d'écoles : le budget provincial 2024-2025 jugé peu clair par des Fransaskois », *Radio-Canada*, 21 mars 2024, <<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2059209/engagement-ffs-cpip-franco-ecole>> (page consultée le 7 juin 2024).

there, a conference presentation by a professor and another speaker (a former La Cité student who is now a teacher), which brought together, in person and online, some thirty people.

Finally, it should be noted that all members of the top management that we had the opportunity to meet share the view that La Cité is a true asset for the University of Regina. As one of them eloquently put it: "La Cité is part of the University of Regina's identity, but it can do more." Absolutely! But we would add that it cannot do it alone. For, after all, Francophonie in Canada affects everyone; or, to use the evocative formula of the University of Regina's Strategic Plan 2020-2025, Fransaskoisie also inhabits All Our Relations.

In conclusion, the context seems particularly opportune to undertake a fundamental reflection to examine whether La Cité currently has the appropriate strategies and means to achieve its vision. We hope that the recommendations we have made in this report will contribute to this reflection.

9. List of Recommendations

Evaluation Process

- 1) Add legends to the institutional statistics tables provided to evaluation teams to clarify the abbreviations used.
- 2) Allow more time to meet with teaching staff and students. As these were group meetings, we barely had time to chat with certain people due to the same time slot being used for both individual and group meetings.

Teaching

- 3) Conduct an in-depth reflection on the articulation of La Cité's various undergraduate programs to fully exploit the potential of Francophone and Francophile students.
- 4) Create a position for a professor, ideally specializing in translation, to both ensure the sustainability and attractiveness of graduate programs and develop institutional expertise in a versatile field.
- 5) Explore the possibility of adding an option to the Master's and Doctoral programs in Francophone and Intercultural Studies.
- 6) Develop a formal process for coordinating course schedules between La Cité and the Faculty of Education regarding the Bachelor of Education in French program.
- 7) Better recognize the essentially joint nature of several La Cité programs and the primary role it plays in their offering.
- 8) Make a clear distinction between the joint university programs offered by La Cité and its service teaching.
- 9) Enrich the offering of courses taught in French in other academic units through new intra-institutional collaborations.
- 10) Entrust the direction of continuing education to a designated person whose mandate is to deploy it according to a strategic plan.

Research

- 11) Fill the permanent position in literature after the current professor's retirement.
- 12) Restore the position of director of the CRFM and entrust it to a scholar working in the field of studies on minority Francophonies.
- 13) Conduct an in-depth reflection to develop, collaboratively, a strategic plan for the CRFM.

Service

- 14) In the provision of student services, use, if possible, the expertise of other academic or administrative units of the University of Regina.

Administration

- 15) Equip La Cité with a clear organizational structure that is conducive to achieving its vision.
- 16) Stabilize administrative positions that, following a review of La Cité's organizational structure, are deemed to play a critical role of its operations.
- 17) Increase the University of Regina's base budget allocation to include La Cité's unionized administrative positions.
- 18) Strengthen consultative leadership at La Cité.
- 19) Develop mechanisms and structures for regular internal and external consultation.