

External Review of the Faculty of Education, University of Regina

External Reviewers:

[Dr. Blye Frank](#), Professor and Dean, Faculty of Education, [University of British Columbia](#)

[Dr. Cecilia Reynolds](#), Deputy Provost (Students) and Associate Vice-President (Academic), Undergrad, [Memorial University](#)

Internal Reviewer:

[Dr. Troni Grande](#), Associate Professor and Head of Department of English

Site Visit Date: 10-11 April 2017, [Itinerary](#)

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Executive Summary

The Faculty of Education at the University of Regina is mid-size in comparison with other Canadian universities. The Faculty has succeeded in becoming a leader in the fields of anti-oppressive and Indigenous education. Through well-focused teaching and curriculum development, strong research, and dedicated efforts in service, the Faculty of Education is meeting its goals of indigenization, undergraduate and graduate student success, research impact, and community engagement. The Faculty has developed valuable relationships with important educational stakeholders, through its sustained collaborative efforts, particularly with respect to the highly effective internship component of the undergraduate program. On a number of significant fronts, the Faculty promotes diversity, collaboration, and outreach. The Faculty does an admirable job of putting into practice its values of social and ecological justice, as well as cooperation and mutual respect.

This Report contains an overview of the strengths that were observed during a site visit, and the reviewers make a number of recommendations designed to guide several changes that would further enhance the work of those in this Faculty. Moving towards a culture of transparency, with greater attention paid to equitable workloads, program structures and service commitments, and support of faculty research, would aid the Faculty in more fully realizing its goals, and in positioning itself even more advantageously in future. In order to succeed at this transitional moment in its history, the Faculty will need to give careful attention to strategic development of its unique programming, such as the Arts Education program with training in five disciplines, and *le BAC* program (*le Baccalauréat en éducation française*), and to recruitment of a more expansive pool of students. Greater flexibility, adaptability, and nimbleness as an organizational unit could also be achieved through review and adjustment of the Faculty's program structures and

external service responsibilities. Given the skills, talent, and passion of researchers in the Faculty, fuller mentorship and planning of research programs could improve research productivity and success in grant applications. Overall, the Faculty of Education is a highly focused and dedicated unit, with a clear vision and mission that have led to significant success in teaching, research, administration, and outreach at the University of Regina and in the communities it serves. With a strategic and practical approach to supporting faculty and improving transparency, the Faculty of Education stands poised to achieve even more widespread recognition and impact for its influential contributions.

Preamble

The Review Team for the External Review of the University of Regina's Faculty of Education consisted of two external reviewers, both administrative leaders in Education: Dr. Blye Frank (UBC), Dean of UBC Faculty of Education; and Dr. Cecilia Reynolds (Memorial University), Deputy Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic) Undergrad. The internal reviewer was Dr. Troni Grande, Associate Professor and Head of the English Department. Prior to the site visit on April 10th and 11th, 2017, the Review Team was provided with the Faculty of Education's Self-Study Report, which includes sections on staffing and resources, scholarly output, community service initiatives, programs offered, enrolments, and the Faculty budget, along with background information and a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).

In addition to the Self-Study, the Unit Review Policy was examined by the Review Team, in preparation for writing this report. Supplementary information and key documents were made available to the Review Team, including enrolment statistics, strategic plans, budget plans, and policy documents.

The site visit was initiated with a meeting between the Review Team; the University Provost and Vice-President (Academic), Dr. Tom Chase; and the Vice-President (Research), Dr. David Malloy. Dean Jennifer Tupper then effectively oriented the Reviewers and facilitated all aspects of the site visit, until the Review Team's penultimate wrap-up meeting with her. To conclude the site visit, the Reviewers met again with the Provost and the Vice-President (Research). The Review Team extends its sincere appreciation for the warm hospitality and generous assistance of Dean Tupper, the faculty members in Education, and the support staff who guided the site visit.

During the course of the site visit, the Reviewers also met with the following groups and individuals:

- Associate Deans of Education: Dr. Paul Clarke (Faculty Development and Human Resources), Dr. Ken Montgomery (Research and Graduate Programs), Dr. Valerie Mulholland (Student Services and Undergraduate Programs)
- Support Staff in Education
- Members of the Education Planning and Priorities Committee
- Members of the Indigenous Advisory Circle
- Dr. Thomas Bredohl, Dean of Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

- Members of the Elementary Program Group
- Members of *le BAC* Program (*le Baccalauréat en éducation française*)
- Education Undergraduate Students
- Education Graduate Students
- Members of the Arts Education Program Group
- Members of the Secondary Education Program Group
- University Librarian and Liaison Librarians
- External Representative(s)
- CIET Director and Members of CIET Board

Areas of Reputation and Recognition

The Faculty of Education has established itself locally, provincially, and nationally as a front-runner in innovative and anti-oppressive education. It has taken influential strides in ensuring undergraduate and graduate student success, research impact, and community engagement, particularly with Indigenous communities. There is ample evidence that the Faculty of Education is meeting its ongoing commitments, as laid out in the Faculty's Strategic Plan, 2016-21: "social and ecological justice, indigenization, sustainability, cultural and linguistic diversity, life-long learning, service, outreach and the collaborative processes that flourish in a community of caring and mutual respect."

Indigenization

The Faculty of Education has done particularly commendable and groundbreaking work in Indigenization, which aligns well with the University of Regina Strategic Plan, *peyak aski kikawinaw*. Not only is the Faculty home to four self-identified Indigenous scholars (the highest number of such scholars in any faculty at the University of Regina), but many faculty members engage in Indigenous research and methodologies. The Faculty has made abundantly clear its strong leadership in Reconciliation education, and on many fronts its "strong commitment to Indigenization of process, practices, and curriculum." Among its many initiatives, the Faculty of Education has successfully implemented the following: the Indigenous Advisory Circle, a key part of the formal structure of the Faculty; Treaty Education for all undergraduate programs; the University's only Elder in Residence Program; the Faculty's official response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action; and, for the first time in Saskatchewan, a day of education for students and teachers of grades 5 through 12, in partnership with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation: "Walking Together: A Day of Education for Truth and Reconciliation." In addition, the Faculty maintains long-term relationships with communities within and beyond Saskatchewan, through its Teacher Education Programs for Indigenous students: NORTEP, YNTEP, SUNTEP, FNUniv (Indigenous Education), NTEP. The strengths of the Faculty of Education in the area of Indigenous leadership will continue to grow, given its recent success in advocating for a Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Truth and Reconciliation.

Relations with Field

The Faculty of Education has cultivated numerous valuable relationships with educational stakeholders, including the Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA); the Ministry of Education; the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF); the Gabriel Dumont Institute; and the League of Educational Administrators, Directors, and Superintendents (LEADS). The Faculty's dedication to partnerships that support distance teacher education, including not just Indigenous Teacher Education Programs but also regional colleges, provides a significant contribution to the diverse communities within the province and beyond. Despite budget constraints, the Faculty sustains an effective field-based orientation. The undergraduate programs incorporate field experiences in every year, and a pre-internship in the third year, along with an internship seminar and the culminating four-month internship in the final year. The Faculty's Self-Study persuasively argues that this field experience is "a cornerstone" of the program, allowing for "a rich learning opportunity to combine theory with practice" as well to foster important professional relationships. The Faculty of Education justly lays claim to the centrality of field experience and internship in its educational mission.

Social Justice

The Faculty of Education vigorously pursues social justice on many fronts: teaching and curriculum development, research and scholarship, and community-based programming. The Faculty's motto, "Inspiring and Transforming Education," encapsulates its determination that education become the means of making the world a better place for everyone. The Faculty celebrates diversity and inclusivity. In its core work within the University of Regina, and in its partnerships, education, and dealings with external stakeholders, the Faculty insists on social justice for all. A concern for social justice is evident not just in the Faculty's programming, but in its process of program renewal and teaching practice. The Faculty of Education also affirms the importance of working towards ecological justice.

Arts Education Program

The Arts Education program at the University of Regina is unique in Canada, in preparing teachers of kindergarten through grade 12 in the five disciplines of Dance, Drama, Visual Arts, Music, and Literature. As a result of a discerning investment in program renewal, the Faculty of Education recently streamlined the Arts Education program into four years. The uniqueness of this program, and its innovative collaboration with MAP resources, as well as the program's potential appeal to prospective students and employers, make it ripe for expansion and recruitment possibilities.

Le BAC (le Baccalauréat en éducation française)

The *Baccalauréat en éducation française (le BAC)* program meets vital needs in communities across Saskatchewan and more broadly in Canada. The BAC program prepares students to teach “in minority language/cultural contexts in core French, French immersion, and French first-language settings throughout the country.” It is the only such program in Saskatchewan. The program involves a national partnership with l’Université Laval, where BAC students spend the second year of their program, in Québec City.

Challenges

In the preamble of this Report, we have outlined the various ways in which the Faculty of Education is playing a strong role in meeting the University’s vision, mission, goals and priorities. The Faculty of Education Strategic Plan 2016-2021 spells out the priorities and aspirations of the Faculty. In the self-study, the SWOT analysis delineates this again.

During our visit we saw evidence of strengths; however, we also saw evidence of many challenges. In this section we make several recommendations as to how the Faculty could move forward in the next several months and years to review and adjust its program structures and meet its external service responsibilities, improve its research productivity, and become more flexible, adaptable, and nimble as an organizational unit.

Program structures and external service responsibilities

During our site visit, the various faculty, staff and students we interviewed told us that they knew very little about the workload distribution across faculty members or within staff. It is understandable that as the recent “workflow” project with staff moves forward, some of the uncertainty we heard about from staff will diminish, but a similar undertaking for faculty could have positive results. A publicly available chart of workload assigned to faculty members, showing class sizes and other assigned duties (such as graduate and/or internship supervision) would help everyone understand challenges facing the faculty in light of budget downturns expected in the next several years. Such charts are frequently used at other universities and they often reveal ways in which program configurations or other structures need to change when resources are diminishing.

It is unusual in Canadian Faculties of Education for the *curriculum vitae* of tenure-track faculty to be held as confidential documents. In publicly funded organizations such as universities, such documents are often part of websites, research reports, or other dissemination outlets. The faculty cvs for the purposes of this review were shared with us outside of the website where other materials were displayed. This was a strong indication that within this Faculty there is currently some sensitivity to transparency. In an environment where colleagues can only speculate about

what others are doing in terms of teaching, research, and service, it is not surprising that we repeatedly heard concerns during our site visit about imbalance in terms of gender, race, and other forms of equity, and in terms of engagement in undergraduate programs. There is a perceived need to take steps to improve equity with regard to workload and opportunities to take part in decision-making. Greater transparency can often help those within a unit grapple with structures around allocation of workload.

Despite hearing about the need to indigenize and internationalize the curriculum in the various programs within this Faculty, we also heard that there was no publicly available repository of course outlines. Such a repository could be helpful and would be a major part of a culture of transparency that would benefit faculty and staff as they implement their strategic plan. It would be helpful to graduate students if such outlines were accompanied by a multi-year plan for course delivery so that students could plan out their graduate program completion timetable.

While we learned that collegial processes often informed action within the Faculty of Education, several people indicated that they were not sure how people were selected to sit on various committees that undertook such work, nor were they clear about how a range of decisions were made. A clear and publicly available list of committees, their membership, mandate, and projected timelines is standard practice in many Faculties of Education across the country and such a list could prove useful for this Faculty in light of comments we heard from faculty, staff and students about a lack of clarity with regard to decision-making processes. A mechanism that might work well in this regard for the interim Dean and/or for the new Dean is the use of an internal blog, newsletter, or website that provides regular update to keep all in the community aware of the many collegial processes underway, and to invite as many voices as possible into conversations underway.

Recommendation 1

*Effective with the start of an Interim Dean and continuing into the work of a new Dean, efforts should be undertaken to **create a culture of transparency** within the Faculty of Education that will foster greater collegial input into a range of decisions including workload, program configuration and possible change, budget allocations, and committee formation and processes.*

The recommendation to strive to create a culture of transparency in the Faculty of Education is in no way a criticism of the current leadership within the Faculty. Without efforts from the various members of the Faculty to create such a culture, the interim Dean or the new Dean will find it very difficult to follow the suggestions we have made in this section.

Graduate Teaching and Secondary Education Program

Particular attention should be given to the number of graduate programs and the use of metrics to provide a justification and rationale for their continued offering. With the financial state-of-affairs, a reduction in the number of graduate programs is recommended. The secondary program is also in need of review.

Recommendation 2

*The Faculty is advised to **review its graduate programs** and their relationship to the core mission of the Faculty.*

Recommendation 3

*A **review of the secondary program** should be undertaken with a particular focus for developing learning and teaching opportunities across the now siloed subject areas.*

Structures in the Faculty of Education

While reviews may lead to a decision to continue things as they are, confirmation of that desire following a review is important, as are decisions to alter or remove structures or to establish new structures. Such reviews should include, but perhaps not be limited to reviews of:

- the extent to which the mutual goals of the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Faculty of Education at the U of Regina are currently being met with regard to **the SUNTEP program**
- the extent to which the titles and portfolios of the current **Leadership Team** within the Faculty (Associate Deans, Subject Chairs, etc.) are the ones needed for the future
- the processes currently employed to allocate **workloads** across tenure-track faculty members and the amount of teaching workload currently allocated
- the possible benefits of establishing an **“External Advisory Council”** to assist the Dean in involving various stakeholders in conversations about the strategic plans of the Faculty.

Recommendation 4

*In addition to reviews of programs in the Faculty of Education, it is important that the interim Dean and then the new Dean undertake a set of collegial processes to systematically **review a range of “structures”** currently employed in the Faculty of Education.*

Financial Planning

The Faculty should put in place mechanisms in which the budget, including different sources of revenues and distribution of finances, is better understood by faculty members so it can continue to develop a collective motivation and effort for the diversification of revenue streams. An increased understanding across the faculty may heighten the faculty disposition to collaborate efficiently to solve the financial challenges.

With the present exercise on work-flow underway, a strategic approach to recruitment, marketing, fundraising, alumni engagement, and communications should take top priority. Attention should be given to partnerships with the central University of Regina units to offer assistance.

Recommendation 5

*The Faculty needs to **adjust its financial plan** for future years.*

Strategic Internationalization

In the rapidly changing environment of internationalization, our site visit provided evidence of the need to develop a strategic plan beyond what currently exists within this Faculty for international engagement and high-level research in the area. Such a plan should be as inclusive as possible of the range of interests and abilities of all faculty members.

Recommendation 6

*The Faculty needs to **revaluate its Centre for International Education and Training**.*

Improved Research Productivity

While the task of supporting research productivity is too large for an interim Dean, it is a critical one for the new Dean and involves complex approaches. Materials provided to us and comments we heard during our site visit paint the picture of a group of faculty who are striving to make sustained contributions in terms of scholarly work and research productivity. We heard that teaching and supervision responsibilities make it difficult to do scholarly work and to undertake funded research projects. We learned that, unlike the patterns at many other institutions of comparable size, there are questions about the adequacy of research staff support. Hiring such **staff** within the Faculty could prove valuable but, in and of itself, will likely not be sufficient.

We suggest that in the review of programs and structures within the Faculty, consideration be given to the possibility that a “**research term**” could be available to faculty members on a cyclical basis.

The discussions we had during the site visit reveal that newer faculty members need the help of more senior faculty in terms of formulating their research plan and delineating the steps needed to help them **use seed money**, such as that available through local sources (SIDRU, McDowell Foundation etc.), to build small projects as pilots for larger projects more likely to garner further and more extensive external grants. We noted some recent success with regard to CIHR and SSHRC grants and encourage the new Dean to leverage such success to inspire others and to learn from their colleagues what elements fostered such success.

While we heard about the informal assignment of **mentors to incoming new faculty** members, we also heard that this system was not working optimally. We suggest that the faculty reconsider this strategy and work towards mechanisms that have proven successful in other places (such as writing retreats, joint sessions with graduate students on writing grants, peer editing of proposals prior to submission, public talks by those within the faculty undertaking research projects of varying types, etc.), as some of these approaches can bolster morale as well as productivity in terms of different types of scholarly pursuits. It is important for new faculty who have recently completed their dissertation research to transition away from work as a sole researcher towards the type of research undertaken when scholars hold several research grants and work with teams of other researchers and graduate students.

Recommendation 7

*The new Dean for the Faculty of Education will need to **find a variety of mechanisms to support the research productivity of each of the faculty members**, despite the challenges that decreasing budgets may present.*

Recommendation 8

*A new strategic **mentoring plan** for the Faculty should be developed.*

Increased flexibility, adaptability, and nimbleness as an organizational unit

During our site visit and in the materials we examined, we noted that there were areas where, with concerted effort, the numbers of students in specific programs could be increased over the next several years. One such area is the distinctive Arts program, and another is the French Language program. Each of these programs could be marketed so that an expanded range of students, both inside Saskatchewan and across Canada or even internationally, might consider coming to the University of Regina. These two programs should consider how they might offer students a link from undergraduate to graduate study or to a certificate of some sort.

There are a number of certificate programs that this Faculty would do well to consider mounting, such as ones in English as an Additional Language, Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and/or a program leading to a certificate for Educational Assistants. The suggested External Advisory Council could prove helpful in terms of considerations around the details and potential market for such certificates. Offering these programs on-line, in community and/or

linked with School Board priorities has proven successful in other parts of Canada and can generate important revenue streams to support other needed activities within the Faculty.

The University of Regina, like all post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan, will see their provincial operating budget cut by 5% this year. Funding for universities, and their affiliated colleges, has decreased each of the last three years. The university will be forced to consider reducing its costs; however, the reviewers suggest that a focus be placed on the ways that revenue can be generated. These might include additional certificate and diploma programs to meet the needs of a wide-range of educators, including in the international terrain.

Recommendation 9

As in all universities that are faced with imminent reductions of government funding, the interim dean and the new Dean need to focus a considerable amount of their time towards diversifying the ways in which funds come into the Faculty budget, in particular, ways that revenue can be generated.

Strategic Alignment of Initiatives

A strategic alignment helps organizations like the Faculty of Education to define what matters most to the organization and then create a roadmap (strategic plan) to achieving the organization's purpose. This strategic alignment requires planning, a willingness to re-assess what is offered, and to make serious adjustments in order to achieve sustainability and to meet its objectives.

Recommendation 10

*The interim dean and the new Dean should engage in a process of **strategic alignment** of all present and new initiatives within Faculty. This includes aligning **budget, facilities, time, staff, space, and new revenue streams.***

Because the greatest amount of funding is spent on salaries, the Faculty needs to have a close look at both its faculty and staff complement. In assessing its strategies of objectives and goals, the Faculty may realize better ways of operating with its current complement. Weaving this with the strategic plan, budget, and new revenue streams should allow for sustainability even with the budget cuts that the university has received.

Recommendation 11

*An immediate **hiring freeze for both staff and faculty** would significantly help foster the strategic alignment that is required.*

Digital Literacy

Faculty/Schools of Education must educate teachers to have the knowledge and ability to use a wide range of technology tools for varied purposes. Digital literacy skills are critical for 21st-century learning. The Faculty of Education should take a proactive stance on providing digital literacy to its students, faculty, and staff.

Recommendation 12

*Attention needs to be given **increasing digital literacy** throughout the faculty.*

Summary of Recommendations

1. Effective with the start of an Interim Dean and continuing into the work of a new Dean, efforts should be undertaken to **create a culture of transparency** within the Faculty of Education that will foster greater collegial input into a range of decisions including workload, program configuration and possible change, budget allocations, and committee formation and processes.
2. The Faculty is advised to **review its graduate programs** and their relationship to the core mission of the Faculty.
3. A **review of the secondary program** should be undertaken with a particular focus for developing learning and teaching opportunities across the now siloed subject areas.
4. In addition to reviews of programs in the Faculty of Education, it is important that the interim Dean and then the new Dean undertake a set of collegial processes to systematically **review a range of “structures”** currently employed in the Faculty of Education.
5. The Faculty needs to **adjust its financial plan** for future years.
6. The Faculty needs **to reevaluate its Centre for International Education and Training.**
7. The new Dean for the Faculty of Education will need to **find a variety of mechanisms to support the research productivity of each of the faculty members**, despite the challenges that decreasing budgets may present.
8. A new strategic **mentoring plan** for the Faculty should be developed.
9. As in all universities that are faced with imminent reductions of government funding, the interim dean and the new Dean need to focus a considerable amount of their time towards diversifying the ways in which funds come into the Faculty budget, in particular, **ways that revenue can be generated.**
10. The interim dean and the new Dean should engage in a process of **strategic alignment** of all present and new initiatives within the Faculty. This includes aligning **budget, facilities, time, staff, space, and new revenue streams.**
11. An immediate **hiring freeze for both staff and faculty** would significantly help foster the strategic alignment that is required.
12. Attention needs to be given to **increasing digital literacy** throughout the faculty.