University of the Fraser Valley

Global Development Studies

College of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:
Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts

Accepted by:
Senate in October 2026
Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in September 2026

MEMORANDUM

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

TO:	James Mandigo, Chair, Senate
FROM:	Tracy Ryder Glass, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee
CC:	Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts Geetanjali Gill, Director, School of Social Justice and Global Stewardship
DATE:	September 25, 2026
RE:	Program Review – Global Development Studies

The Global Development Studies program within the Faculty of Social Sciences, College of Arts recently underwent a program review. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review and accepted them at its September 23, 2026 meeting and recommend to Senate for acceptance.

A key recommendation included a suggestion to explore whether the GDS should remain a stand-alone program or become a major within the BA. This change has the potential to conserve resources by streamlining program administration. Further discussion is needed about the program's appeal to both domestic and international students. Offering the GDS as a BA Major with direct entry admission may have positive implications for both international and domestic recruitment.

The review commends the GDS program's critical, decolonized curriculum, experiential learning opportunities, support for diverse students, and preparation of graduates to address complex local and global challenges. The APPC also recognized the commitment to reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization.

Congratulations to the small, but mighty, program review team!

Suggested motion:
THAT Senate accept the Global Development Studies Program Review as presented.

Dean's Summary Report

Global Development Studies (GDS) Program Review, School of Social Justice and Global Stewardship, Faculty of Social Sciences, College of Arts

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean of Arts, May 19, 2026

Introduction

The GDS program review occurred in Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 in accordance with Policy 189.

The following credentials were examined:

- GDS BA Degree
- GDS Minor

The Program Review was informed by a self-study report conducted by the GSD program committee in accordance with the template provided by UFV's program review office. The External Review Committee (ERC) conducted an in-person site visit on February 26-27, 2026, Abbotsford campus. The site visit included meetings with myself, the GDS program faculty and students, the College of Arts Partnership Development and Practicum Coordinator and Academic advising.

The External Review Report (ERR) was received on March 25, 2026. The Action Plan presented by the program faculty addresses all recommendations made by the ERC.

Overall, the review highlights the high value of the GDS program grounded in critical, decolonized perspectives and enriched by experiential learning. In the words of the ERC, "the program prepares students to address complex challenges, fostering intercultural competence, social justice commitments, and an understanding of 'global' as encompassing both international and local contexts." The program is delivered with just 1.5 full-time faculty members and is administered, along with sister programs (PACS and Indigenous Studies), by the School of Social Justice and Global Stewardship (SoJust).

The review's central recommendation is to consider restructuring the stand-alone GDS degree as a major in the Bachelor of Arts. This would increase the program's visibility, facilitate internal recruitment, and enable students to take the GDS major along with another major in the BA. (The GDS Minor would remain as is). This change would also reduce the administrative burden due to the considerable number of courses from other disciplines that are currently included in the stand-alone degree, requiring constant monitoring and upkeep of calendar copy as well as coordination.

I note the many commendations offered throughout the external report. They range from the faculty's thorough and thoughtful collaborative efforts in renewing the GDS curriculum, the availability of experiential learning options which support students' personal journeys and professional readiness, the support provided to students of many diverse backgrounds, and the participation of program faculty, students and alumni in a range of public events.

I wish to express my appreciation to the program faculty led by Dr. Geetanjali Gill for their serious engagement in this core quality assurance activity, the ERC for their thoughtful observations and recommendations, and the program review staff for their impeccable logical support.

Program Review: Action Plan

Global Development Studies BA Degree and Minor Programs

Curriculum and Assurance of Learning

Goal 1: Enhance existing GDS courses, learning of current GDS students, and engagement with prospective GDS students.

This goal is related to recommendation no. 1 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 6):

- *Consider team teaching opportunities, either by way of coordinating guest lectures or pre-recorded minimodules. Recent GDS curriculum renewal can be further built on by organizing short guest lectures or pre-recorded micro-modules featuring different faculty members showcasing their areas of expertise. Not only would this* ***enhance existing courses and the learning of current GDS students, but these videos can also be used to engage prospective GDS students*** *and spur more interest amongst students to pursue GDS courses and pathways. These pre-recorded modules can also be used as external recruitment tools (e.g. shared with local high schools students, played at UFV Open Houses, shown to lower-level students in AIS courses, provided to Advising etc.).*

Teach-teaching has implications for faculty members' workload, and will depend on faculty expertise. This option will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis. Currently, some GDS faculty members do carry out in-person or online guest lectures in courses taught by other faculty members. This practice will continue and be strengthened. The recommendation to have GDS faculty members (and even faculty members who teach courses in other disciplines that are included in the GDS program) make pre-recorded guest lectures/minimodules is a good idea, and this can be easily implemented. Pre-recorded guest lectures are also useful if a faculty member is unavailable to do a guest lecture at a particular time.

Tasks to complete Goal 1:

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Ask interested faculty members from GDS and programs that teach into GDS to record mini lectures related to their areas of expertise or the courses they teach. Use these videos inside and outside of GDS program. Continue practice of diversifying faculty who teach GDS 100. Continue to invite faculty members into GDS courses for guest lectures.	A minimum of 5 recorded mini-lectures/guest lectures. Ensure faculty member signs a consent form for use of videos.	Start in Fall 2026 and then ongoing as needed.	GDS Program Chair and faculty. Support from COA Digital Communications Strategist to edit videos as needed.

Goal 2: Consider ways to expand GDS course offerings to include more professional skills-related courses.

The External Reviewers' Report made a relevant suggestion (though not a recommendation) (pg. 6):

- *With additional faculty resources, it is likely that* ***GDS offerings could expand further,*** *prioritizing issues including project management and monitoring, data for development, development praxis and activism, as well as other emergent themes that are likely to be of significant interest to students*

Due to the small numbers of GDS students and faculty members, we have not been able to offer our own courses in NGO management, project management, program evaluation, policy etc. Though we have created a new SJGS 395 course in Participatory Methodologies to address the need for our students to have professional skills to work in the social justice/development sectors. Until GDS student numbers grow, we can explore the possibility of offering online micro-credential courses for students and alums to build their skills in these important areas (e.g., we can examine what the School of Business is doing with micro-credentials). These micro-credentials can also be offered to practitioners and staff members of NGOs outside of UFV.

Tasks to complete Goal 2:

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Investigate opportunities for GDS skills-based micro-credential offerings. Engage GDS in COA-wide efforts around micro-credentials. In the meantime, encourage all GDS faculty to include skills-based assignments in existing GDS courses.	Work with Dean of COA to gain support for development of micro-credential courses. Speak to others at UFV who are working on micro-credentials. Poll GDS students/alums. List of possible GDS micro-credentials ready by May 2027.	Fall 2026 until May 2027	GDS Program Chair

Goal 3: Establish regular events and opportunities to showcase the recently renewed/updated GDS program for the benefit of current and prospective GDS students

This goal is related to recommendation nos. 2 and 3 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 6):

- *Consider a re-launch of the GDS program by way of an academic symposium aimed at introducing the new GDS approach to faculty and students. The symposium can also invite development scholars from other locations, involve other BC graduate programs, particularly those that may be of interest to UFV undergrads. The reviewers from Dalhousie and SFU would be pleased to contribute to this effort. Content from the symposium can also be used for future recruitment efforts.*
- *Coordinate for practicum students (and if relevant, perhaps 4th year capstone students) to give mini-presentations about their experiences in praxis-based learning in GDS 100 and perhaps also the capstone GDS course. This offers good experience for students, and encourages student retention in the program.*

The newly created GDS Student Association can play a lead role in the planning and organizing of this symposium (with support from GDS faculty and COA staff). Some efforts in this direction have begun with the involvement of TRU's Social Justice Masters student involvement in the COA Arts Expo/Showcase in March 2026. GDS's linkages with the NGO program at Kwantlen Polytechnic, International Studies programs at SFU, and the GDS Minor program at UVic can be harnessed to widen involvement of other universities and undergrad and graduate students from across BC. Some virtual involvement of students and faculty from other GDS programs across Canada can also be planned.

Currently, GDS capstone and practicum students are required to prepare and deliver live or recorded presentations about their experiences and learnings. However, these students largely present for other students in GDS 400 (capstone course), for other internship students, or at the COA Expo/Showcase. These students can also be asked to present or give their permission for pre-recorded presentations to be shown in upcoming GDS 100 and SJGS 300 courses, and at high schools, Open Houses etc. for engaging prospective GDS students.

Tasks to complete Goal 3:

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Establish a regular annual student symposium that centres GDS students (and other students in SoJust). Invite others from within and outside of UFV community to participate. Advertise event widely. This event can include GDS practicum students sharing their experiences. This symposium can build from the COA Arts Expo/Showcase held in March 2026 (that included TRU Masters students).	Next event to be held in Winter or Summer 2027. Possible barrier: cost of event as we are in a time of fiscal restraint at UFV.	Start planning in Fall 2026; hold event in Winter or Summer 2027	GDS Program Chair and faculty, School Coordinator Involve GDS Student Association Support from College of Arts Dean's Office

Student Achievement

Goal 1: Further strengthen processes and systems to support GDS students' practicum/internship and experiential learning opportunities, with particular attention to international internships

This goal is related to recommendation no. 1 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 8):

- *Our first recommendation here is also provided under the Governance and Resources section below: we recommend an effort to coordinate more support for GDS students' international practicum experiences. These are such an important and distinctive strength of the GDS program, attracting students and consolidating their satisfaction with their UFV education. Maximizing available resources to secure, fund, and support such placements seems a very strategic approach.*

Processes to govern, manage, and supervise international internships have been established, but as international internships increase in number each year since Covid-19, these processes can be reviewed and further strengthened. It will be necessary to engage UFV International, COA Partnership Development and Practicum Coordinator, and the Research Office (for QES scholars funded interns only) in these discussions. The School Coordinator also plays a key role in obtaining required documents from students who are planning internships, setting up CRNs for SJGS 300 (internship course) etc.

Tasks to complete Goal 1:

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Revisit procedures and systems in SoJust/GDS for planning, coordinating, and monitoring student practicums/internships. See how to make improvements to support students, and gain efficiencies.	3 meetings held in 2026-27, involving GDS Program Chair, SoJust School Coordinator, UFV International, COA Partnership Development and Practicum Coordinator, the Chair of Bachelor of Regional & Community Planning, and Research Office. Updated guidelines on the process to be created and shared by May 2027.	Fall 2026 and Winter 2027	GDS Program Chair and School Coordinator to arrange meetings.

Goal 2: Strengthen ties between current GDS students and GDS alums; and find ways to showcase the achievements of GDS alums

This goal is related to recommendation no. 2 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 8):

- *We recommend increasing efforts to build ongoing relationships with GDS alumni. These relationships can be drawn into wider efforts to connect students to information and inspirations relevant to their studies and future pathways.*

The External Reviewers' Report also made some suggestions (separate from the above recommendation) (pg. 9):

- *We suggest other specific strategies like students creating their own LinkedIn profile…Scheduling periodic engagements including invitations to special events and digital communications with alumni…Alumni can also provide examples of students' experiences and achievements which can be used in GDS communication materials, including for recruitment.*

Efforts have started to connect with GDS alums. The School Coordinator will be asked to reach out to graduating GDS BA degree and GDS Minor students to ask for personal emails. Graduating students will be added to the GDS alum list so they can be invited to attend and speak at future events etc. GDS 400 (capstone) students are asked to create a LinkedIn profile, and the GDS program can create a LinkedIn page so graduating students can follow news on this page, and contact each other more easily. There are also plans to reach out to GDS alums to get career updates that can be shared on the SoJust/GDS website and blog sites. These efforts will continue.

Tasks to complete Goal 2:			
Task	**Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome**	**Timeline**	**Assigned to**
Put system in place in GDS to connect with graduating GDS BA and Minor students and add them to a GDS Alum list. Let GDS alums know to stay in touch through GDS/SoJust Social Media platforms, Linked In etc.	GDS Alum list created by May 2027. Send an email communication to GDS alums letting them know about social media platforms by May 2027. Inform UFV Alumni Association of these efforts.	Start in Fall 2026. List by May 2027. Ongoing effort.	GDS Program Chair, School Coordinator.

Governance and Resources

Goal 1: Continue to work with College of Arts Deans and COA Partnership Development and Practicum Coordinator to support students carrying out international practicums/internships (especially in potential emergency situations).

This goal is related to recommendation no. 1 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 11):

- *Give focus to coordination with the Associate Deans in the College of Arts and/or the College of Arts Partnership Development and Practicum Coordinator when supporting international student practicum experiences, especially in potential emergency situations.*

The external reviewers noted an increasing diffusion of responsibility between various UFV programs and departments for coordinating international practicum and Queen Elizabeth Scholars (QES) experiences, which adds to the complexities of practicum coordination (pg. 11).

Please refer to the comments provided under goal #1 in 'Student Achievement' as they are linked to these recommendations.

Tasks to complete Goal 1:			
Task	**Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome**	**Timeline**	**Assigned to**
Revisit procedures and systems in SoJust/GDS for planning, coordinating, and monitoring student practicums/internships. See how to make improvements to support students, and gain efficiencies.	3 meetings held in 2026-27, involving GDS Program Chair, SoJust School Coordinator, UFV International, COA Partnership Development and Practicum Coordinator, Chair – Bachelor of Regional and Community Planning (QES), and Research Office. Updated guidelines on the process to be created and shared by May 2027.	Fall 2026 and Winter 2027	GDS Program Chair and School Coordinator to arrange meetings.

Goal 2: Increase and strengthen collaborative efforts to market and boost recognition of UFV's GDS program (within and outside of UFV).

This goal is related to recommendation no. 2 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 11):

- *Consider additional ways of marketing the GDS program, program events, and student success, for example by finalizing the website redesign to share student practicum and other learning experiences and uploading that content, by working more closely with the College of Arts Digital Communications Strategist and/or UFV Marketing and Communications to expand mainstream and social media content, and/or by delegating this task to a specific focal point who can develop and maintain website and social media content.*

- *While GDS has posted some introductory videos featuring on its websites, we recommend pursuing the creation of additional video content that can be actively disseminated in targeted ways across regional high schools to raise awareness and interest in GDS and UFV. We recommend GDS faculty could work with COA and UFV Communications teams to prepare a dazzling micro-lecture on a topic of broad interest to high school students who might be taking courses like Social Justice, Political Science, Genocide Studies, etc. as part of their high school curriculum. GDS and UFV could offer this video as free content to high school teachers. A substantive and stimulating micro-lecture is likely to be more effective than a general introductory video because high school students will be prompted to think about how they might pursue positive social change in the world through UFV's uniquely focused GDS program.*
- *There are additional practical steps that UFV can take like simply ensuring more signage for the GDS program offices, and/or by GDS faculty and staff using other available mechanisms like the UFV institutional repository, HarvestIR, to profile student and faculty work. In addition, consider leveraging new opportunities for marketing the program as they emerge such as the proposed program re-launch and/or the proposed BA reconfiguration, which will offer opportunities for GDS to combine resources with other departments at UFV to jointly convene future panels and events. The newly created GDS Student Association may also be able to play a volunteer role in promoting the GDS program using social media.*

The External Reviewers also commented on the underutilization of social media (pg. 12):

- *We observe that the GDS program is likely underutilizing social media, especially Instagram, TiKTok and Youtube, and has many other student stories and experiences to share including student blogs about their local and international practicum and study abroad experiences that are vital to showcasing the program and attracting new students.*

The GDS program has understood the need to strengthen and continue to build GDS (and SoJust) websites for the benefit of prospective students, current students, and alums for some time. There are plans to create and upload content on alum achievements/stories, student practicum and learning experiences on website and social media sites for the GDS program, SoJust, COA, and UFV. This work will be done together with COA Digital Communications Strategist, and UFV Marketing and Communications. The School Coordinator can also be tasked with making regular updates to GDS program social media (in addition to that of other programs in SoJust).

Tasks to complete the Goal 2:

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Strengthen presence of GDS program on social media.	Set up GDS/SoJust LinkedIn page. Other social media exist already.	May 2027	GDS Program Chair, School Coordinator, COA Digital Communications Strategist, GDS Student Association, GDS Research Assistant.
Upload content on GDS website regarding alums and their achievements.	New content loaded on GDS website.	May 2027	GDS Program Chair, School Coordinator, COA Digital Communications Strategist, GDS Student Association, GDS Research Assistant.

Planning and Sustainability

Goal 1: With a view to boosting student numbers in GDS programs, investigate and consider the advantages (and disadvantages) of a BA Major in GDS instead of the current standalone BA degree program. (The GDS Minor will remain).

This goal is related to recommendation no. 1 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 13):

- *As we have already outlined above under our initial Assessment section, we recommend a deliberate process to consider restructuring so that the GDS is changed from a standalone program to become an option for a student's BA Major. This would need to be a 'full team' effort, including GDS members, other implicated programs and departments, Advising, and the Dean, so that all potential advantages and disadvantages are carefully considered.*

The External Reviewers' initial assessment also speaks of a potential restructuring to include a GDS Major with a view to ensuring the growth and sustainability of the GDS program (pg. 3). Such a restructuring may increase the program's visibility, facilitate internal recruitment, and enable interdisciplinary combinations (e.g. double majors) with complementary disciplines. However, they caution that any changes should preserve the program's distinctive curriculum and reputational strengths.

The External Reviewers' recommendation no. 3 can shed light on ways to boost student numbers, and may feed into the consideration of advantages (and disadvantages) of restructuring to include a BA Major in GDS (pg. 14):

- *We recommend UFV Institutional Research and Planning provide more GDS program disaggregated data and/or assist with tracking specific types of student data concerning why students leave the GDS program so that GDS faculty and staff can address student retention. These data should also seek to understand any equity gaps for Indigenous and racialized students to better understand any challenges and inform future practices. We also recommend Institutional Research and Planning assist GDS to directly survey their students about their program and course interests and preferences for specific types and timing of course delivery to inform program planning.*

With growing and strengthening the GDS program being a major priority, steps will be taken to examine the implications of a possible restructuring (from a GDS standalone degree and GDS Minor, to a GDS Major and GDS Minor). This will involve extensive consultations with the Registrar, Advising, PDQA, Admissions, Office of New Students, other UFV BA Major Program Chairs/Department Heads/Directors, students, and alums. It may also be helpful to look into the experiences of other GDS BA Major and GDS standalone degree programs in Canada.

Steps will also be taken to request more detailed data from UFV's IRP.

Tasks to complete Goal 1:

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Investigate the advantages (and possible disadvantages) of moving from a GDS standalone degree (with a Minor) to a Major (with a Minor). Speak with other programs, faculty members, COA Dean's Office, Director of PDQA, Registrar, Advising.	Report produced by May 2027.	Start in Fall 2026. Report by May 2027.	GDS Program Chair and faculty.
Poll GDS students and alums about this change.	Survey results by July 2027.	End of Summer 2027.	GDS Program Chair.
If report is favourable for this change, start procedures to put this change in place by Fall 2027.	Documents submitted by Dec. 2027.	Fall 2027, Winter 2027.	GDS Program Chair.

Request more detailed and disaggregated data for the GDS program from IRP.	Email sent by June 25, 2026.	Disaggregated data to be collected by IRP as of Fall 2027.	GDS Program Chair.

Goal 2: As student numbers in GDS programs grow, ensure increased resources to support this growth and ensure the best possible student experience.

This goal is related to recommendation no. 2 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 13):

- *We believe that a full-time permanent tenure-track GDS faculty appointment is likely essential to ensuring the GDS program can grow through pursuing multiple initiatives, especially those linking additional curriculum to student recruitment.*

The External Reviewers commented on the difficulties of justifying a new GDS faculty hire in the current climate of fiscal austerity and GDS student numbers (pg. 13). They also noted the critical role played by a GDS Sessional Instructor, teaching key GDS courses and encouraging student engagement. They encourage UFV to consider ways to support the sessional instructor to complete their PhD while they continue with the GDS program (pg. 14).

This goal is also related to recommendation no. 4 from the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 14):

- *As the GDS program grows, we recommend designating a meeting room for GDS program faculty and students to hold small events and for student-faculty-staff meetings. This would likely enhance the sense of community as well as facilitate increased collaboration.*

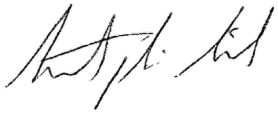
This goal also relates to a suggestion made in the 'Governance and Resources' section of the External Reviewers' Report (pg. 10):

- *It is anticipated that as the GDS program grows, it may be necessary to revisit and expand the GDS library acquisition budget.*

Tasks to complete Goal 2:

Task	Key Milestone or Measurable Outcome	Timeline	Assigned to
Track and analyze GDS student numbers over the next 2 years to anticipate hiring needs.	Yearly report produced each May.	Start in Fall 2026. Each year.	GDS Program Chair. School Coordinator.
Work with COA Dean's Office to secure a meeting room for faculty members and GDS students.	Meeting room options discussed and secured.	Dec. 2026	GDS Program Chair. School Coordinator. Learning Support Facilitator in COA.
Assess GDS library acquisition needs for upcoming years and discuss how to increase budget to meet needs.	Library acquisition scan completed and discussed with COA and Library Liaison.	April 2027	GDS Program Chair. School Coordinator. Library Liaison.

Dean's Summary Statement
Please refer to the Dean's Summary Report at the beginning of the GDS Action Plan.

Action Plan reviewed and approved by:
Information verified by:
Department Head: Dr. Geetanjali Gill Date: May 19, 2026 
Dean: Dr. Sylvie Murray Date: May 19, 2026