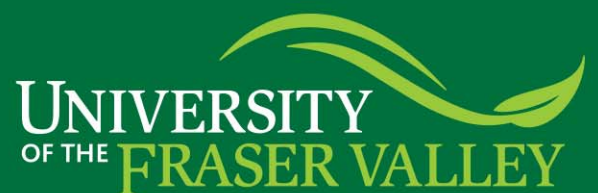# Action Plan Progress Report

Applied Business Technology Program Review (2018–2019)
Faculty of Access and Continuing Education

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Introduction

To conclude the program review process for the Applied Business Technology (ABT) program's 2018–2019 review, the academic unit submits the following update on the seven recommendations made in the External Review Committee (ERC) report. The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in the academic year following ABT's program review put a damper on many of the recommendations in the original report; however, the move to online delivery expedited the use of digital technologies across the institution and allowed ABT faculty to meet several of the additional suggestions in the original ERC report.

Update: Recommendations

For each of the seven recommendations made by the ERC, the recommendation itself is quoted at the beginning of each section and is followed by the original estimated timeline and an update on the current status of the recommendation.

1. Move ABT to a base-funded model

Consider moving ABT to a base-funded model. The cost-recovery model is not effective and potentially could have a negative impact on instructional practices because there is often overwhelming pressure to ensure that all registered students are retained to meet budget targets. ABT consistently produces solid FTEs and has a strong reputation for quality and enrolment. It is said to be a valuable program in the UFV offerings. It provides industry- relevant, employment training in a field identified as being in high demand (e.g., Labour Market Outlook 2025). ABT has clearly demonstrated that it is sustainable through a long track record of program delivery, student satisfaction, high retention rates, ongoing demand, and employer support. (From p. 10 of the *Program Review External Review Report, May 2019*.)

Estimated timeline: Dean's office will discuss implementation of base funding in fall 2020 with Finance as part of long-term budget planning.

Current status: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, UFV budget constraints, and impending plans to reorganize various UFV faculties, action on this recommendation has not been undertaken.

2. Addition of a third permanent faculty member

Another permanent faculty member would help to reduce the risks associated with current faculty taking time to do professional development, research, or program development. An additional position would also support mentoring of sessional faculty and could take on specific roles such as coordinating work practicums, developing stronger ties with employers, and teaching content-specific courses. Additionally, there are areas where faculty would like to develop more programming, including a post-ABT option; however, there is no time with current workloads to focus on this kind of development. (From p. 10 of the *Program Review External Review Report, May 2019*.)

Estimated timeline: Dean's office will discuss implementation of a third faculty position in fall 2020 with Finance as part of long-term budget planning.

Current status: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, UFV budget constraints, and impending FACE restructuring, action on this recommendation has not been undertaken. Once implementation of this recommendation is underway, ABT faculty intend to incorporate EDI principles into the recruitment process.

3. Business analyst review

Consider providing ABT with the short-term services of a Business Analyst to review institutional systems and workflow so that the program can determine the most effective use of resources and faculty time. A Business Analyst could determine where the workload pressure points are and help the ABT faculty develop a sustainability plan. (From p. 10 of the *Program Review External Review Report, May 2019*.)

Estimated timeline: Faculty will initiate discussion of a systems and workflow review with the Business Transformation Office in fall 2020.

Current status: As ABT will remain a cost-recovery program for the time being and as the size of the program is not anticipated to change for the foreseeable future, allocating a business analyst review to the program is not the best use of university resources at this time.

4. Develop advisory committee

Develop and maintain an advisory committee with local employers. This will support the program in staying current with curriculum development and will allow for deeper connections in the community, which in turn benefits practicum placements and job opportunities for graduates. (From p. 11 of the *Program Review External Review Report, May 2019*.)

Estimated timeline: Faculty will identify potential members and initiate the implementation of an advisory committee in the 2019/2020 academic year.

Current status: Due to the program head being on sabbatical in 2019/2020 and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic within the same year, no action was taken on this recommendation in 2019/2020. The program head is currently undertaking recruitment of advisory committee members, and the committee should be in place by fall 2021.

5. Dedicated clerical support

Provide dedicated clerical support on-site to the ABT department. If resources are limited, consider even two days a week of dedicated on-site support. This level of support would free up valuable time for the Department Head to focus on program development. This could also help to streamline certain work processes, including student information sessions and assessment testing. A closer working relationship with the Office of the Registrar (OReg) and admissions staff could reduce the communications work involved with prospective students. (From p. 11 of the *Program Review External*

Review Report, May 2019.)

Another option is to provide an additional course release to the Department Head. This may provide an opportunity to hire another permanent faculty member, thereby helping to create a succession planning process. (From p. 8 of the *Program Review External Review Report, May 2019.*)

Estimated timeline: Dean's office will discuss implementation of a .5 clerical staff position in fall 2020 with Finance as part of long-term budget planning.

Current status: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, UFV budget constraints, and impending FACE restructuring, action on this recommendation has not been undertaken. In the interim, the dean's office will continue to provide part-time clerical support, and plans are underway to ensure clerical support is maintained upon transition into a new faculty area.

6. Strategic marketing plan

Develop a strategic marketing plan for increasing enrolment diversity. Specifically, encouraging enrolment from a diverse population that is reflective of the Abbotsford population would be a goal. This could include, for example, actively trying to increase the male population and/or the South Asian population to reflect more closely the make-up of the Abbotsford community. (From p. 11 of the *Program Review External Review Report, May 2019.*)

Estimated timeline: Faculty will work with relevant departments (e.g., Marketing) to develop a strategic marketing plan in the 2020/2021 academic year.

Current status: As the ABT program continues to run full cohorts (as well as a waitlist), development of a strategic marketing plan has been put on hold for the time being. Over-marketing the program when capacity is limited to 52 students a year could cause frustration in applicants unable to secure a spot and have a detrimental effect on the program's reputation.

7. Prioritize succession planning

The department should strive to recruit sessional instructors with the ability to teach across a variety of content areas in the ABT program rather than having sessional instructors with only one area of expertise. (From p. 11 of the *Program Review External Review Report, May 2019.*)

Estimated timeline: Faculty will recruit for succession planning once funding for a third faculty position has been secured. Timeline is dependent on budgetary decisions.

Current status: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, UFV budget constraints, and impending FACE restructuring, action on this recommendation has not been undertaken. Once implementation of this recommendation is underway, ABT faculty intend to incorporate EDI principles into any succession plans.

Update: Additional Suggestions

Two of the additional suggestions in the ERC's report were regarding Web 2.0/cloud computing and Outlook use. ABT faculty had long sought robust access to cloud-based technologies for use in the ABT program in order to ensure ABT graduates were equipped with the workplace skills desired by employers. The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic expedited the adoption of additional digital technologies at the institutional level including the introduction of M365 for students. ABT faculty are currently integrating these networked platforms into the curriculum, particularly Outlook, Teams, and One Drive. Faculty continue to use a department-supported WordPress instance (via a Canadian service provider) but hope for an institutionally-run WordPress instance in future for use by faculty, staff and students across the institution.