

General Studies Diploma

College of Arts

Dean's Summary

Submitted by:

Dr. Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts

Accepted by:

Senate in February 2022

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee in January 2022

MEMORANDUM

Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

APPC Chair: James Mandigo

APPC Assistant: Melinda Saretzky

TO: Joanne MacLean, Chair, Senate

FROM: James Mandigo, Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

CC: Sylvie Murray, Dean, College of Arts; Michelle Rhodes, Program Chair; Claire Carolan, Associate Director, Program Development and Quality Assurance

DATE: February 10, 2022

RE: General Studies Diploma Program Review

The General Studies diploma within the College of Arts underwent a program review in 2020-21. The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee reviewed all of the documentation related to the program review and accepted them at its January 19, 2022 meeting and recommend to Senate for approval.

The Dean's summary noted that this program is very flexible and the number of options have increased. The UNIV 101 course is very well received, and discussions are taking place regarding the possibility of a required course. The APPC discussed laddering options and it was noted that additional flexible pathways at UFV is attractive and this diploma is also a good home to transition certificates from private institutions and may also attract international students.

SUGGESTED MOTION:

THAT Senate accept the Dean's Summary Report of the General Studies Diploma Program Review as presented.

Attachments:

- Dean's Summary Report

Remainder of the documents located:

- UFV Drive: S:\Public\UFVinfo\APPC\ELS Program Review
- Blackboard: COM-APPC (Senate Committee – APPC)

Dean's Summary Report, General Studies Diploma, Program Review

Dr. Sylvie Murray, January 11, 2022

In May 2021, a Program Review site visit took place in accordance with Policy 189. The External Review Report (ERR) was received in July 2021 and the program committee submitted its response to the external review in September 2021. The Program Review was informed by a self-study prepared by members of the Integrated and General Studies Program Committee (IGSPC). The self-study was informed by the Dean's scope letter. The self-study committee members relied on data provided by Institutional Research and from surveys conducted with students. The External Review Committee (ERC) met with several stakeholders, including students, faculty, sessional instructors, staff and members of UFV's senior administration.

The General Studies diploma has been administered, with support from the College of Arts, by a program chair from 2015 to 2019; the responsibility was folded in a two-year temporary Director's position in 2019 (along with responsibility for transfers and partnership, and administration of the Bachelor of Integrated Studies). The Director is supported by the IGSPC, whose purpose is to ensure that the curricula satisfy the requirements for depth and breadth of study, and support the needs of General Studies students.

The program headcount has ranged between 621 and 862 between 2015-16 and 2019-20, and reached a high of 1,016 in 2020-21. The diploma is a flexible program that allows students to take courses from a variety of areas, and use transfer, applied, and professional program credits. There is no required course in the diploma, but three competencies must be met (communications, numeracy, and science or digital literacy). The diploma is aligned to ladder in the Bachelor of Integrated Studies. The program has a low residency requirement (15 credits), lending itself well to receiving transfer credits from other institutions, either on a course-by-course basis or through block transfers.

The External Review Committee's report was positive, noting the range of course options that the it offers, its growth over the years, and the significant contribution of this program to the university's strategic and education goals.

What follows is a list of recommendations as ordered in the External Review (ER) Report's Summary of Recommendations (section 8). Responses by the program committee and dean are noted under each, with specific action items.

The General Studies Diploma's companion program, the Bachelor of Integrated Studies (BIS), underwent a parallel review and recommendations are cross-referenced as relevant.

1. Appoint a full-time director of GSD and BIS programs: The ER team recommended the appointment of a full-time director, stating that strong leadership is necessary to "prioritize and advocate for a breadth of course offerings with a comprehensive range of delivery modes" (p. 3) and that "without a director in place, advisors work would triple" (p. 9). The program committee agrees but the Dean favours a different approach, one that would provide the diploma with a departmental home after the current temporary Director position ends on Sept 1, 2022. (For advising, see #2 below).

Background: In summer 2020, the Dean of Arts created the temporary two-year term position of *Director, Integrated and General Studies, Transfer and Partnerships*. The position was tasked with two sets of responsibilities: 1) administer the BIS and the GSD, including conducting review of the programs; 2) facilitate the development, approval, and maintenance of transfer and partnership agreements associated with the BIS, GSD and/or other programs within the College of Arts. The latter was partly a response to backlog in transfer and partnership work, need to create an inventory of agreements, and streamline process. Pairing IS/GS administration with transfer and partnerships represented a departure from the more conventional approach that the College of Arts had utilized in previous years to support the BIS/GSD, namely course releases for a BIS/GSD Program Chair (3 annually in 2019-20 and 2018-19; 2 annually in 2017-18 and 2016-17; 1 in 2015-16) and part-time staff assistance.

The Dean is committed to restoring the level of support previously extended to the BIS and GSD--i.e. 3 releases annually--and in addition proposes that the diploma (and degree) be put under the stewardship of the recently created Department of Arts Studies. Situating the degree and diploma in an academic unit--as opposed to these programs being administered by a director, with the assistance of a part-time staff and advisory committee--will provide additional support in the form of faculty service time and student-oriented collaborative space (see below, D3 renovation).

The Arts Studies department was created in late Spring 2021 and administers the single course that most students in the General Studies diploma take – University 101. Faculty members in Arts Studies have expertise in integrative career and capstone learning (1 FTE), University Studies (1.4 FTE), interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary learning (1 FTE), and 2 faculty members are cross-appointed from the Department of Communications, with specializations in Interdisciplinary Writing Studies, Intercultural and Adult Education. The Arts Studies department also includes sessional instructors who teach UNIV 101. A change to the name of the Department, to “Arts and Integrated Studies”, would signify its broadened mandate.

The College of Arts is not in a financial position to continue supporting Transfer and Partnerships through a dedicated half-time position as it has since Sept 1 2020. This responsibility falls under the Vice-Provost office.

The Dean will continue to provide administrative support to the Director of IS/GS, Transfer and Partnership, until Aug 31, 2022. Administrative support for IS/GS through .25% increase to the Arts Studies Department Assistant will be provided, effective Sept 1, 2022.

Action: The Dean to engage the Arts Studies faculty members about the department hosting the BIS/GSD diploma, effective Sept 1, 2022, including changing the name of the department to “Arts and Integrated Studies”, with financial support as described above.

2. Require mandatory advising and pre-arrival supports for international students prior to entry to the program

Mandatory advising is not a direction currently contemplated by UFV Advising and it falls out of scope of this review. This said, given the diploma’s flexibility, and to ensure that students are well prepared for

success in future programs and are aware of opportunities for career-readiness, early advising is highly desirable. To support BIS/GSD advising, the Dean of Arts is committed to seconding a faculty advisor on the model utilized by the Faculty of Science (faculty partly released to Advising for a 2-year term, funded by the College, and trained by Advising). The addition of a required course in the diploma (UNIV 200) will also provide an additional touchpoint to guide students' pathways. (See recommendation 5 below).

The self-study discussed the need for pre-arrival support, which the external review did not comment on. The Dean's office will continue to engage with UFV International on providing pre-arrival support to ensure student success.

Action: That a faculty advisor be seconded for a two-year period to advise students in the BIS/GS diploma to start in Fall 2022.

3. Full-time Director to expand upon partnership agreements and to explore options for a provincial outcomes-based articulation agreement.

Given their flexibility, the GSD, like the BIS, are ideal destination programs for partnerships with other organizations, including with McDonalds and Surrey Fire (the latter brought 36 students to the DGS in 2021, trending towards the BIS). While the College of Arts has dedicated resources to support partnerships through the temporary Director's position, support for partnerships is an institutional responsibility that will continue to be coordinated by the Vice-Provost office.

Likewise, exploring options for a provincial outcomes-based articulation agreement is a responsibility that falls to the Vice-Provost office.

Action: That the GSD program administrators work closely with the Vice-Provost office to continue to promote the program as an optimal destination for partnerships and transfers.

4. Revise the Terms of Reference for the Integrated and General Studies Program Committee (IGSPC) to include representatives from EDI and T&L in Indigenization and Internationalization.

Structure of the IGSPC is also addressed as part of the BIS review, with recommendation made to replacing the IGSPC by an Advisory committee and a curriculum committee (recommendation #5). The recommendation to add representatives on each committee with commitment to, and expertise on, EDI, Indigenization and Internationalization is an important one.

Action: That the Terms of Reference for an External Review committee and a Curriculum committee include representatives with expertise in EDI, Indigenization and Internationalization.

5. Develop UNIV 200 with a focus on EDI and integration into and agency within Canada for international students.

This recommendation aligns with the program's self-study report which recommended a course that builds on UNIV 101, and supports both domestic and international students will a focus on EDI, career planning supports, deliberate integration of learning from other courses, and leadership and mentorship skills to support post-graduation adaptability (p. 35, Self-Study). The Dean supports the addition of such a course as a requirement in the GSD with attention given to utilizing ARTS 299 if substantial overlaps exist.

Action: That the Director work with faculty members teaching UNIV 101 to articulate learning outcomes to be achieved by a core course to be required for all GSD students. The course (or additional sections of ARTS 299 if it is decided that substantial overlaps exist) will be integrated in the Enrolment Plan for 2023-24 following curricular approval.

6. A focused consideration, with abundant caution, should be given to the program's name change. Broad consultation internally and external to UFV to ensure that the name reflects the true purpose of the credential itself.

The External Review team universally agreed that the name should change to better reflect the purpose and mandate of the program, raise the profile within the broader community, with considerations given to alternatives suggested (University Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies, Integrated Studies), intercultural connotations of a name change, and implications in terms of signaling that laddering into the BIS is the main pathway for GSD graduates wishing to pursue degree-level studies.

The program committee's response suggests 1) "quiet" consultation with comparable credentials at other institutions to ascertain whether concerns over naming of non-disciplinary two-year credentials are common (and transcend the particular nomenclature of *General Studies*); and 2) a session inviting UFV faculty members, advisors, and staff to discuss "'big picture' questions related to the diploma, including but not limited to the name of the credential." (Program response, p. 11).

The Dean agrees that a "quiet" consultation with administrators of similar programs at other universities would be useful and likewise with engaging internal stakeholders in an open discussion about the name in the context of soliciting engagement with the program more generally speaking.

Action 6.1: That the Director consult program administrators of similar programs in BC and Yukon on optimal name for non-disciplinary diploma. See Table 4.4 of the Self-Study for list of comparable General Studies Diploma in BC and Yukon.

Action 6.2: That the Director, in consultation with IGSPC, host a session with internal stakeholders as recommended in their response.

7. The IGSPC advocate for outcomes-based admission criteria for GSD graduates laddering into other UFV degree program

The external review team observed that “currently, the GSD meets four of eight institutional learning outcomes. If a UFV policy is adopted utilizing outcomes-based admissions to the third-year of degree programs, and by using good course selection through advising, students could be well-prepared for admission to degree programs beyond the BIS.” (p. 6)

This proposal, akin to moving UFV towards a university-wide general education framework, has value, especially in light of the strategic priority given to flexible pathways, but is beyond the purview of this review to implement. The Dean of Arts is interested in engaging in this conversation if there is an institutional will to do so.

8. The GSD/BIS Director initiate discussion through BCCAT to establish a provincially articulated transfer agreement for general studies diploma graduates.

The external review team suggested that UFV would be well placed to lead a discussion with other institutions through BCCAT to develop an outcomes-based articulation agreement, and that it would enhance the profile of the diploma within UFV and externally if students knew that they “can go anywhere from here”.

The program committee noted the Director’s interest in doing so, and that “because such an initiative would be a multi-year commitment, this relies on establishing a permanent Director’s position.”

Action: That the Vice-Provost considers the value and feasibility of this recommendation.

9. UFV to initiate data collection on graduate mobility

The external review team noted that there isn’t any solid data on GSD students’ post-graduation mobility (whether they go into the workforce and, if they continue their education, what path they follow). They recommend that UFV initiate such data mobility.

The program committee had provided a list of desired data points on this question.

Action: That the data points be provided to the Dean of Arts who will work with Institutional Research and Planning to assess feasibility of this recommendation.

10. Create a physical space for students to utilize and connect with other general studies and integrated studies students

The renovated third-floor of building D, which has been designed as a student-friendly, collaborative space to facilitate student interactions and student-faculty connections will provide such a space. See also section 2, BIS review, re: Student Engagement Plan.

11. International recruiters to market the program as providing a foundation for entry into Canada.

The program committee agrees that this is important to pursue.

Action: That the program administrator (Director in 2021-22 or Arts Studies Department in 2022-23) explore with International Education targeted recruitment for the GSD and recruiters' messaging about the GSD.

12. Market the GSD as having value to domestic students as a foundation to go anywhere

The external review team noted the importance of domestic recruiters being fully informed on the programs' strengths and suitability to domestic students who would benefit from this program. The program committee agrees and concludes that "identifying appropriate messaging that captures both an emphasis on flexibility and on laddering opportunities is key".

Action: That the program administrator (Director in 2021-22 or Arts Studies Department in 2022-23) work with Recruitment to identify appropriate messaging that highlights the value of the program to a domestic audience.

13. EDI-based training for the staff and advisors who serve GSD students should be developed and employed

The external review team stressed the importance of the GSD better serving Indigenous students' needs by building new strategies to nurture and retain Indigenous students; and the importance of cultivating a transparent and open culture of respect for international students; they further note that one strategy to aid meeting the needs of both Indigenous and International students is by ensuring that EDI-based practices in hiring and/or training for faculty for the GSD diploma.

The program committee notes that, while they are not responsible for the training or hiring of staff and advisors, they agree with the importance of any efforts to increase EDI training opportunities for everyone, including faculty who work with GSD students and the program committee itself through adding EDI as a standing item to its agenda.

Action: That the program administrator (Director in 2021-22 and Arts Studies Department in 2022-23) continue to be attentive to improving the experience of Indigenous and International students in the GSD, and that an account of concrete actions taken to this effect be included in the mid-cycle report.