Curriculum Renewal and Program Review

Haliburton Campus Summary Report February 2009

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**Summary Report of Activity**

**Haliburton School of The Arts (HSTA)**

**I. Introduction**

This summative report consolidates observations, comments and feedback arising from the modified Curriculum Renewal process and its outcomes, and positions the School for on-going curriculum maintenance and quality assurance.

It should be noted that the challenging review process was undertaken during a time of major staff transition. The first, full-time faculty appointment, Dar Bolahood, was hired for a January 2007 start. Sandra Dupret took over the position of Campus Principal from Barb Bolin in November 2007. Susan Little, the long time co-ordinator of the arts certificates, retired in May of 2008. Jennifer Bain assumed that role in September 2008. Val Bishop assumed the role of curriculum lead for a limited period in early 2007, after which she was not replaced.

In addition, these staffing changes occurred at a time when it was becoming increasingly apparent that the School had to reassess the balance between recreational arts courses and the academic rigour required in order to sustain credible academic credentials.

The Haliburton campus delivers the following programs:

Arts

* Visual and Creative Arts diploma (1-2 years, delivered in accelerated and/or traditional formats)
* Art Certificates (one year delivered in 14 weeks in an accelerated format)

Artist Blacksmith

Ceramics

Fibre Arts

Glassblowing

Jewellery Essentials

Painting and Drawing

Photo Arts

Sculpture

* Expressive Arts Graduate Certificate (8 week accelerated delivery)
* 300 (+) arts courses delivered annually throughout spring, summer, fall and winter (Con Ed)

Sustainable/Ecological Programming

* Sustainable Building Design and Construction (one year Ontario College Certificate program, delivered in 20 weeks in an accelerated format)
* Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism Management Graduate Certificate (traditional delivery, one year)

Apprenticeship Programming

* Landscape Horticulture Basic
* Landscape Horticulture Advance
* Cook Pre-Apprentice

Traditional Continuing Education Courses and Corporate Training

* Over 40 courses annually

**II. Curriculum Renewal Method -- Arts**

An environmental scan was completed in Jan/Feb 2007 in order to assess labour market trends and the range and scope of competitor programs. Sylvia Coones (Sutherland Library) identified and consolidated material including labour market data as well as profiles of competitor programs. The latter included:

a) Foundation certificates in art and design

b) Two year and three year visual arts diplomas

c) Diplomas which are slightly broader in nature than 'fine art' and which align with Haliburton's inclusion of creative arts and crafts

d) Any information related to articulations and university transfer

e) Information on shorter, specialized craft certificates, especially those

that are comparators to Haliburton programs.

Of note, reviewing labour market data in relation to the arts is not always a useful exercise. The studies are sporadic, and often too generalized to be useful. The benchmark studies of 10-15 years previous still provide some of the most relevant and useful direction around the educational needs of beginner and established artists. The recent Status of the Artist in Ontario is one of the more useful of these reports.

For the Haliburton School of the Arts, the renewal process has also had to accommodate discipline based distinctions, as well as differences in academic models and processes specific to the campus location; many of which evolved in response to different needs as well as resource limitations.

It was agreed that some programs would be priorities for review in 2007. These included **Artist Blacksmith, Drawing and Painting, Textile Surface Design, Ceramics, Figurative Sculpture, Photo Arts** and the **VCAD**. **Jewellery Arts** and **Glassblowing** were considered for a later date. However, given the need to align the VCAD with the Certificates, all programs were reviewed to a greater or lesser degree. The VCAD curriculum became the priority as it was the driver for all other programs and the interface between the curricula was key in order to avoid duplication of courses or redundancy of content for students moving between the foundation diploma courses and a certificate.

**III. Outcome of Curriculum Renewal:**

Program re-design

Programs were reviewed for positioning, patterns of enrolment, and marketing strategies, as well as being compared to strengths, weaknesses and direction of other programs of a similar nature.

Outcomes included:

**1. A through revision and re-positioning of the VCAD**

This accomplished two primary outcomes. First, the program is now better aligned with accepted norms and academic rigour of peer programs, including strong foundation courses common to the discipline, while maintaining significant distinctions offered by the Haliburton Campus Program which include emphasis on studio time, specialist or generalist certificate options as well as a focused arts learning environment.

It is probably in this program that the most significant curriculum adjustments were made, the most work invested, and the greatest outcomes achieved. Of note, this program had no Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLOs). Their development was a challenging, significant and pivotal piece in the overall re-design of the VCAD and allied programs and were key to the clarification of both the meaning and value of the foundation courses.

All certificates were realigned so as to ensure a better fit with the VCAD curriculum and establish clear distinctions between the roles of the certificates and that of the diploma.

A third, generalist pathway was developed for students through a collection of 12 pre-selected courses from our summer school course offerings. Students choosing this pathway would have to take one overarching and binding capstone course to provide a context and relationship between the VCAD year and the summer courses. This will be offered in August and April for pre-registered students.

In summary, the intention of the VCAD has shifted from a legitimization of recreational courses to a program of study based on a recognized discipline. This is a significant re-positioning.

Other program modifications to the certificates include:

* An in-depth review of Textile Surface Design in relation to overall program positioning and curriculum focus.
* An in-depth review of Figurative Sculpture in relation to student numbers and overall program positioning.
* Significant re-positioning of Drawing and Painting both to avoid duplication with the VCAD and to ensure appropriate balance.

Lesser modifications were made to curriculum in the following programs:

* Artist Blacksmith
* Ceramics
* Glassblowing
* Jewellery Arts required a new Design for Jewellery course
* Photographic Arts

In summary each certificate program now has:

* An art history course (designated mandatory general education)
* A shared Marketing and Portfolio course
* Drawing and design courses to build craftsmanship
* Future renewals should include considerations to develop a capstone for the certificate experience that will allow students an opportunity for reflection and integration
* Art history, design and drawing courses that are specific to the medium of the certificates

The renewal process helped to resolve disparity in levels of learning between certificates and focus on foundational curriculum in a holistic, program based experience.

**IV. Post Secondary Non-Arts Programming**

**Sustainable Building Design and Construction (SBDC):**

Currently in its fifth year, this program receives annual assessment and revision at the end of each project by program Coordinator, Chris Magwood. While its outcomes remain consistent, the nature of the program is organic, allowing this strong project based learning experience to flex and adjust from year to year with the curriculum adjusted accordingly. The SBDC will be due for a full program review in the next year.

**Ecotourism Management and Adventure Tourism Management (EAM):**

EAM had been experiencing a decline in enrolment over the past several years. In 2008, with the support of the program coordinator, David Ward, and CLT consultant, Helen Knibb, a program viability report was completed. This report summarized elements of declining enrolment trends, increased costs, shifting industry trends and program advisory feedback, with a result of a less than desirable position for the program in the Haliburton campus academic mix.

The viability report details highlight enrolment trends, costs and global shifts which include:

**Enrolment Trends**

* It appears that the number of applicants in proportion to the number of registrants is not directly related. For example, as per the 1994 data, 32 applications converted to 24 registrants while in 2003, 125 applications converted to 29 registrants. It appears that there is no predictable or proportional relationship indicating that increased applications equals increased registrants.
* Averaging the number of registrants over fourteen years, the average class size is 25 students. But averaging over the past 5 years, the average class size has been only 14 students.
* With respect to competitor program enrolment trends: Data provided by FDR provided only one year’s worth of statistics with regard to enrolment numbers at competitor colleges rendering comparison difficult. However, these numbers indicated low competitor enrolment, ranging between 7 and 16 per class.
* Programs identified as competitors by FDR are not post-graduate management programs, leaving the above mentioned comparison in question. Having said that, further program research indicates that two new post-graduate programs have been created: 1) Ecotourism Management at James Cook University in Cairns, Australia, and 2) Strategic Leadership in Tourism at Royal Roads University/Capilano College. The second program consists of five courses, two held in Whistler, BC and three completed through online learning. On completion, students receive a Graduate Certificate awarded by Royal Roads as well as a Post-Baccalaureate Citation in Tourism Leadership from Capilano College.
* Fleming’s EAM program is also in competition with Lindsay SENRS’ two and three-year programs. For example, SENRS expanded their own third-year programs, adding flexibility around obtaining double-diplomas while creating and heavily marketing an additional 140+ potential seats for SENRS students seeking to expand their knowledge base. Prior to this program expansion, EAM’s enrolment would include a number of SENRS graduates, averaging over fifteen annually. The suspension of SENRS’ Park Operations and Outdoor Recreation program has also negatively impacted EAM enrolment.

**Program Costs**

* Program costs were already extended, with excessive program hours currently at 870 while originally approved for 615, further impacting profitability undermined by decline in enrolment. This program also includes costs for day field trips and field camp. Additionally, the funding weight for EAM is at the low end of the scale, resulting in minimal grant provisions.
* This program has a full time faculty complement.

**Industry Trends and Program Advisory Feedback**

The PAC recommends that courses become more accessible and that the program grow the opportunity for distance learning making the information accessible to people already in business. For professionals in the field who wish to update their skills, leaving their communities for eight months of study may not be possible. The PAC recommends that an investment be made to explore options to provide greater accessibility to EAM courses.

Marketing EAM is also an area that requires specific, targeted attention. The nature of EAM is such that it is best marketed via Web 2.0 options. The PAC recommends that a vigorous web based marketing strategy be put in place for EAM and that Fleming College as a whole review the marketing plan for graduate programs.

The final recommendation of the viability report is to redesign EAM to address cost, enrolment and access issues. In conjunction to this measure, the relocating EAM to another program cluster (such as SENRS or SoBC&H) would address issues of program location, support and marketing. A comprehensive report with all supporting data and recommendations has been submitted to the Office of the Vice President, Academic. The fall 2009 intake for EAM has been suspended. Pending review and evaluation of the program viability report, the program may be considered for future launch in another school.

**V. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This high level snapshot provided by the findings of Haliburton Campus’ 20-page school report and the Eco Tourism Management and Adventure Tourism Management Program Viability Report cannot sufficiently capture a great amount of the detailed expanse of work that has been completed by the school’s faculty, staff and administration over the past two years. The outcome of the reports does provide direction for future academic direction, qualitative advances and improved alignment with the practices and mandate of the college and MTCU.

Based on report findings, the campus will continue to focus on the following:

* Definition of arts nomenclature – the distinctions between the arts, fine arts, decorative arts and craft are dissolving and this needs to be consistently reflected in the language, programming and marketing of the School.
* Restructuring and constitution of the Program Advisory Committee
* Academic rigour – address need and develop process for academic rigour within the summer school courses and those of the certificate and VCAD, while maintaining reputation for high satisfaction and service for student interests in post secondary or recreational learning.
* Assessment methodology – continue to develop useful and appropriate assessment methodologies and tools, with the objective of maintaining transparency and accessibility in assessment progress for over 300 faculty who come to teach in one week blocks.
* Faculty roles and deliverables – as the campus experiences full-time program growth, what has evolved as the traditional faculty role at Haliburton will need to be examined and shaped to align with college norms and faculty roles elsewhere.
* Ongoing support through professional development for faculty and staff
* Ongoing application and assessment through the design and delivery of faculty and course evaluations
* Creation of opportunities for student reflection – certificate students do not have the opportunity to absorb and reflect on their studio practice. We need to examine how the course material is delivered and by whom over this intensive term experience.
* Essential employability skills of graduates need to be enhanced in a way that’s meaningful to the students and which builds across the curriculum.
* Art history - the teaching methodology of the art history courses may need revision to include more theory, if they are to have weight and value in university level articulations.
* Articulations – continuing to build strong pathways to universities.
* Examination of delivery mode in relation to maintaining balance of cost effectiveness and program quality
* Refine processes to track part time students who have been advised that a part time diploma can be achieved without time restrictions. There is general agreement that there must be more rigour around diploma completion and the associated expectations.
* Marketing/calendar copy still requires review and modification.
* New program/course development – there is a dire need for new media and graphic design programming to provide a viable option for students who want to pursue vocational pathways in the arts. Digital Image Design Certificate Program is currently in research/development.
* Design certificate program will afford a ladder into VCAD or a new Graphic Design Diploma.
* An important goal in the HSTA summer school will be continuing to build on the reputation of the summer school and ensure there are appropriate pathways and connections to the post secondary programs. The School needs to grow in reputation and solutions applied in order to clearly define distinctions between the purely recreational courses and those that meet the criteria of post secondary programs.
* On-going curriculum renewal will be maintained across all certificates and VCAD although there is a need to find a way to sustain the process as an ordinary, rather than an extraordinary activity.

In conclusion, over the past two years there was an incredible need for some immediate and significant interventions in order to make sense of the overall collection of programs and course offerings. Without a coherent framework to clarify both the interdependencies as well as distinctions between the diploma, certificates and summer school courses, there was simply no opportunity for growth.

At the same time, the need for reflection over the long term is pressing, as is the need for refocus of traditional faculty engagement. A key strategy has been the successful alignment of the programs at the foundation level. Since 2007, all certificates were renewed, although more work is still required and VCAD was substantively reviewed. Of credit to the co-ordinator, Darlene Bolahood, more changes were undertaken in the course of one year than would normally be tackled in one program review.

A primary goal will continue to be ensuring curriculum relevance across all programs and scanning for trends, while acknowledging that the typical labour market data that informs other programs is simply not available or relevant in the greater portion of these arts programs.