

# TWO (2) YEAR POST CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW FOLLOW-UP REPORT

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM	IQAP REVIEW DATE	SENATE APPROVED
Schulich School of Education -Bachelor of Education -Master of Education (Curriculum & Leadership) -PhD in Education (Educational Sustainability)	November 29, 2018	September 13, 2019

This report was approved by Senate on March 11, 2022

## PROGRESS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	% COMPLETE	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	STATUS IF NOT COMPLETED, PLEASE PROVIDE PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE
#1 - Faculty renewal plan	75%	Dr. Daniel Jarvis, Director, SSoE	Ongoing discussions
#2,3,4 and 15 - Curriculum changes	50%	Dr. Daniel Jarvis, Director, SSoE	Ongoing discussions
#5 - ITEP and TILSL	95%	Chris Hachkowski, Principal, Indigenous Programs	Pending NU Senate and OCT approvals
#6 - PD on professionalism	100%	Dr. Daniel Jarvis, Director, SSoE; Dr. Pat Mahler, Dean of Teaching	Completed
#7 - Student feedback on practica	100%	Dr. Daniel Jarvis, Director, SSoE	Completed
#8 - Grading	50%	Dr. Daniel Jarvis, Director, SSoE	Ongoing discussions
#9, 10 - Alignment of learning outcomes with degree expectations	25%	Dr. Blaine Hatt, GSE Chair	Ongoing discussions

#11 - Educational sustainability	50%	Dr. Blaine Hatt, GSE Chair	Ongoing discussions
#12 - PD programme for supervisors	10%	Dr. Blaine Hatt, GSE Chair	Ongoing discussions
#13 - PD programme for students	10%	Dr. Blaine Hatt, GSE Chair	Ongoing discussions
#14 - International Recruitment as per Annual Academic Plan 2019-20	50%	Dr. Daniel Jarvis, Director, SSoE; Dr. Blaine Hatt, GSE Chair	Ongoing discussions

## SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

### **Recommendation #1: Faculty Renewal**

*The Nipissing faculty complement is comprised almost entirely of full-time faculty members and they are “aging up” with a large percentage set to retire in the next 10 years. Planning for faculty renewal is important to maintain capacity to deliver the BEd program.*

We are expecting an intake of 480 students, which, when added to our current 524 Year 1s (assuming they all return), means potentially 1024 teacher candidates in next year’s BEd program, the largest group we’ve ever had on North Bay campus. Given the high number of sabbatical applications, and two recent retirements, this means that many part-time faculty who work in local school systems, or are retired educators, will again have to be hired to cover teaching requirements. As per the Academic Plan (Fall 2021) submission, we have identified several key areas where strategic hiring could most benefit our projected needs (e.g., Curriculum Design, Assessment/Evaluation, and Proactive/Inclusive Classroom Management in the BEd; Curriculum (Assessment/Evaluation), Educational Leadership, and Indigenous Studies in Education in the MEd/PhD). We await word on tenure-track or LTA positions.

### **Recommendation #2: Classroom Management**

*Consider how to make it possible for all BEd students take a course on classroom management. This is typically an area of great concern for teacher candidates and we have understood that it is currently an elective course that not all students can take.*

*Proactive and Inclusive Classroom Management (EDUC 4762) was approved as a required course for all BED students entering the program after September of 2020. As a result, Technology Enhanced Teaching and Learning (EDUC 4766) became a popular elective course. Given that the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) is now strongly encouraging robust technology instruction (i.e., instructional technology, and also pedagogical implications for online/hybrid instruction), we may wish to re-introduce a required technology course during the upcoming program review process.*

### **Recommendation #3: Indigenous Education**

*We heard that Indigenous Education is “seeping into courses” rather than being specifically planned for broad inclusion. We believe faculty members are very open to increasing their capacity in this area and recommend a curriculum specialist or other strategies to help faculty members Indigenize curriculum and their teaching.*

The Chair in Indigenous Teacher Education has continued to discuss suggestions for a broader inclusion of Indigenous content in the BEd programs. A stand-alone course in Indigenous Education might be considered as an option, although this approach involves the challenge of finding sufficient qualified instructors for such a course, and would also need to displace some other course within our relatively prescriptive professional certification program.

### **Recommendation #4: Climate Change Education**

*Our world urgently needs to tackle climate change. To do so will require many transformations, both technical and cultural. We heard that teaching about climate change may be encountered in the IS science course and the elective course in Environmental Education. We recommend that the Faculty consider how all teacher candidates can learn to incorporate climate change teaching in the divisions and subjects they will teach.*

Work continues, with the assistance of the Chair of Indigenous Education, on the possibility of introducing a seasonal, land-based experience for all BEd students that would naturally integrate Indigenous content and environmental education in an educationally sustainable way, and which would feed nicely into our MEd and PhD programs.

### **Recommendation #5: ITEP 3rd Summer**

*The change to the length of teacher education programs in Ontario has caused challenges to ITEP delivery that may be met through adding a third summer. This is under consideration and we encourage the Faculty to continue working on a plan that works optimally for ITEP students. Alumni survey results suggest that TILSL students may prefer to have enhanced supports for success in the online courses rather than another summer; the decision around program structure for these courses will not be easy.*

#5 – Since the IQAP review, a permanent full-time Student Success Programs – Indigenous Education Program was approved, providing year-round support for all Indigenous students enrolled in on-campus and off-campus Indigenous Education programming. Additional technology resources were developed (ex., program-specific informative videos, dedicated Peer Support Leaders) to support students with online programming. These were extremely beneficial with the transition to full-online programming due to Covid-19 in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021.

In the fall of 2021, documentation was submitted through the academic approval process at Nipissing University to change the 2-year schedule for ITEP and TILSL into a 3-year program. It is expected that this change will receive Senate approval in the winter semester of 2022.

### **Recommendation #6: Workshops**

*Students suggested that workshops to help them understand things such as professionalism, including the interview process, MEd possibilities and AQ courses, would be helpful. We recommend tasking the Teacher Candidate Advisory Council with determining student demand for possible workshop topics and then considering which could be offered to enhance the program and student experience.*

Students have continued to have workshops made available to them each year through the Professional Learning Centre (PLC), during the designated Professional Learning Week/Days, and via the new Teaching Hub. Topics typically include professionalism, resume writing, the interview process, MEd possibilities, and AQ courses. These opportunities have been regularly communicated to students by the PLC and through the Teacher Candidate Advisory Committee (TCAC). During the pandemic, many of these offerings were made available via online participation.

### **Recommendation # 7: Practicum Feedback**

*Consider implementing a mechanism to encourage student feedback on their practicum experience. While we believe that most students are satisfied with their associate teachers and we acknowledge the challenges in finding associate teachers, they are critical to teacher education programs, and it is important that they support teacher candidates and the program. In cases where there are student concerns about the associate teacher, an avenue to voice the concerns is needed.*

The Practicum Office maintains an open-door policy for student concerns about practicum and all email communication received from students along these lines are dealt with expeditiously, sometimes involving the SSoE Director, as appropriate. Although rare, practicum placements have been modified when circumstances warrant. Regular surveys of teacher candidates have been conducted regarding practicum placement, and Practicum Office staff also regularly meet with students online within the Practicum courses to discuss relevant issues and concerns.

### **Recommendation #8: Grading**

*BEd graduating averages appear to be considerably inflated compared to entrance or concurrent program averages. This is a common phenomenon at many Faculties of Education across Ontario. While many justifications are typically provided (not just at Nipissing), such as more chances for mastery learning or better instruction, it is generally recognized that when the average marks on exit are in the high 80s, grades have substantially lost their meaning as conveyors of information to students and others. Changing the culture of grading at a Faculty of Education can be a very painful process. Consideration should be given as to the benefits versus the drawbacks. Benefits may include modelling that is closer to what we hope teacher candidates will do as teachers, and more accurate feedback regarding teacher candidate competency. We recommend that the Faculty consider whether to pursue a reset of grading practices, proceeding if there is wide agreement to do so.*

Assessment and evaluation in the BEd program has continued to be a difficult issue. The option of moving to a pass/fail system, as is done in some BEd programs, has been discussed but not adopted. Modelling authentic assessment is a valid goal, but this is made somewhat more difficult given the structure of the BEd program which involves, by necessity, mid-course practicum blocks, congested assignment due date windows around these blocks, and relatively large class sizes (40+). This topic will continue to be addressed in our upcoming program review.

### **Recommendation #9: Introduce Different Concentrations/Specializations for the MEd**

*Within each of the three available routes for the MEd, students, at present, choose between four and seven course electives. Over twenty electives are listed in BEd/PhD Table 4.3. While it is very unlikely that all these courses are available all the time, even if only ten of these were available students nonetheless would have a rather broad choice. While some choice is good, many students may appreciate the opportunity to focus. We suggest introducing different concentrations, each with clearly defined learning outcomes. When selecting a concentration, students would then need to choose a certain number of courses from a more limited group of courses. This change would help students build expertise in an area of interest.*

The MEd and PhD have seen a tremendous increase in applications since the IQAP Review of September 2019. For example, for the Academic Year 2021-2022, there was in excess of 30 applicants for the MEd program (Full-time and flex-time) and 25 applicants for the 10 spots in the PhD program. As of today's date, there are 20 applicants for the MEd program (18 full-time and 2 flex-time) with more applications expected in the coming days. There are 19 applications on file for 10 spots in the PhD program. When all documents have been received and files created, this number is expected to be in excess of 20.

At present, in the MEd program, there are set themes (i.e., Literacy, Adult Ed) available to students that are largely reflective of a traditional education focus. We continue to explore the possibility of reducing our MEd to two routes rather than three by discontinuing the MRP route and only offering the Thesis and Course Routes.

As we consider where our students are coming from (i.e., education, nursing, business, etc.) it is vital that we review and refresh the structure and programming of the MEd degree as we reconsider what we want to be known for moving forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Toward that end, the entire Agenda of the CSE Curriculum Committee Meeting, 12 November 2021, was directed to a discussion of MEd Concentrations. The committee has four recommendations to make to the February 2022 GSE Meeting:

**Recommendation 1:** Discontinuation of EDUC 5196 as a Core Course

*EDUC 5196: Understanding Education* as a Core Course be discontinued as a core course in the MEd program in all three available routes and be offered as an elective course. The rationale for including this course as Core given the refocusing of the MEd program beyond curriculum and leadership was discussed and felt to be irrelevant at this time which resulted in a recommendation to remove EDUC 5196 as a Core Course.

**Recommendation 2:** Required courses for a Concentration

The number of courses required to constitute a concentration if EDUC 5196 was to remain as a Core, would be three (3) three credit-hour courses and if EDUC 5196 was removed as a Core, then four (4) three credit-hour courses would be required for a concentration.

**Recommendation 3:** Concentrations within the MEd programs

The discussion regarding identifying of concentrations within the MEd programs was very rich and included consideration of faculty workload and succession plans, faculty expertise, phasing in of concentrations, marketing and promotion of revised MEd programs, etc. An overriding principle in identifying concentrations was to choose cluster titles that were inclusive of MEd students coming from disciplines outside but in addition to Education rather than being exclusive or viewed as limiting. The Committee decided on the following concentrations in the MEd program:

- 1) Educational Leadership and Lifelong Learning (ELLL)
- 2) Curriculum Studies (CS)
- 3) Imagination Creativity Education (ICE)
- 4) Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Decolonization (EDID)
- 5) General Studies in Education (GSE)

**Recommendation 4:** Implementation of Concentrations

It is recommended by the Committee that:

- Program learning outcomes be clearly established for each concentration
- A minimum of three GSE Faculty Members be identified as instructors within each concentration
- Each course be identified as belonging to a concentration or concentrations and that the concentration(s) be clearly identified in the scheduling of each course (e.g. *EDUC 5536: Issues in First Nations Education (EDID)*)
- Courses be offered within each concentration on a regular cyclical basis
- The Master of Education Degree Certificate clearly indicate the Concentration(s) the graduate student has earned
- All recommendations of the Committee be forwarded to the Dean of Education and Professional Studies for information and be presented for a full discussion at the February 2023 GSE meeting
- The revised MEd Program (with Concentrations) be implemented, assuming OCT approval for the Fall 2023.

At present, we are accredited to offer an MEd in curriculum leadership; the proposed changes to Concentrations would, in all likelihood, require reapplication to COU to broaden the scope and sequence of our program beyond a traditional, foundational, education focus.

### **Recommendation #10: Clarify Different Expectations for MEd and PhD Students on MEd Level Grad Courses**

*Although it is appropriate that doctoral students take master level courses, we recommend determining the expectations, learning outcomes and assessments associated with these courses for Doctoral students versus MEd students.*

Recommendation # 10 has not been dealt with to date by GSE Faculty. However, it will appear as an item of discussion on the Agenda for the February 2022 GSE meeting.

It is recognized that there needs to be a clear means of engaging PhD students in graduate courses. PhD students would need to identify themselves as such in each graduate course and additional learning tasks would be included in the course for PhD students such as moderation, planning, leadership, and fostering a more critical perspective in course work.

### **Recommendation #11: Change Core of PhD Program to Better Reflect (and Justify) the Focus on ‘Sustainability’**

*We were surprised to see that the core courses of the doctoral program do not demonstrate a clear and strong focus on educational sustainability. If educational sustainability is indeed the distinctive aspect of the Nipissing PhD in education, one might argue that one or two core courses should take up that theme. It is also not entirely clear from the self-study, the website and conversations we had with colleagues how the notion of educational sustainability is interpreted. The self-study states that the program seeks to prepare for educational sustainability through an emphasis on inclusivity and wellness, ethical leadership, inquiry-based professional growth and multiple literacies. While we do recognize the linkages between sustainability and these concepts, we feel that these linkages need to be clarified. A course or two that explicitly help students understand the meaning and importance of sustainability to the field of education would strengthen the program.*

In the Fall 2020, a new course specifically designed for PhD students was added to the Grad Course offerings. The Course, *EDUC 6118 Inquiry-Based Growth & Development in Educational Sustainability*. The course provides graduates students with an opportunity to focus on professional growth as a career-long pursuit of personal inquiry and knowledge creation and to focus on educationally sustainable development that influences cultural, social, ecological, political, and educational perspectives of self and Other. In a collaborative and creative context, students explore aspects of theory and practice in adult and professional fields and apply acquired learning to individual and collective experiential perspectives on educational sustainability.

The conception and implementation of EDUC 6118 is the beginning within Graduate Studies in Education of providing students and GSE Faculty with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to speak and write confidently and competently about educational sustainability. Additional strategies for growth and development in the field of educational sustainability within GSE include:

- 1) Make EDUC 6118 a required course for all PhD students which is presently offered on an elective course for PhD students in the Fall term,
- 2) Implement ways to ensure that the focus on educational sustainability is made more explicit in all required courses,
- 3) During Week 1 of the Summer Institute, provide a Workshop on Educational Sustainability for PhD students that assists them to understand the meaning and importance of educational sustainability in various settings, contexts, and fields not simply those deemed as formal education,
- 4) In the revision to the PhD Handbook include an Introductory Section entitled What is Educational Sustainability? and,
- 5) Provide an opportunity for GSE Faculty to review the overall focus of the PhD program, to review progress, outcomes, potential for growth and open a communication to build faculty wide competence, confidence, and capacity in Educational Sustainability.

### **Recommendations #12: Consider Introducing a PD Program for Supervisors (Both Programs, especially PhD)**

*Co-teaching seems to be a common practice on the PhD programs during the residencies. We are not sure whether the idea of team teaching extends to graduate supervision, especially at PhD level. If it does, great; if not, this is something the University may wish to consider. Not only do students benefit from differences in perspectives or areas of expertise held by the two supervisors but the practice of graduate supervision is also learned best through observation and socialization. Setting up a mentoring program whereby more experienced supervisors are paired with less experienced supervisors is recommended. In addition, we recommend that the Faculty of Graduate Studies in collaboration with the new Dean of Teaching develop a professional development program for supervisors addressing the pedagogical, ethical and regulatory/policy components of graduate supervision.*

GSE recognizes the importance of collaborative teaching, mentorship and co-supervision and actively encourages Faculty to incorporate one or more of these elements in each aspect of the PhD program. To date, all core courses within the PhD

Summer Institute involve collaborative and/or team-teaching. A number of PhD Supervisory Committees include co-supervisors; usually an experienced supervisor teamed with an emergent supervisor. The School of Graduate Studies and Research has reached out to the Dean of Teaching and are in the planning stages of striking a Panel Presentation to be offered through the Teaching Hub on How to be a Good Supervisor. It is anticipated that the Panel will include faculty from various NU graduate programs and NU graduate student alumni. The intended audience is Nipissing University Graduate Faculty Membership.

GSE will continue to work with Graduate Studies and Research to formalize a recommended set of guidelines for students and supervisors. It is anticipated that this document will be detailed and balanced to provide support for supervisors and students.

### **Recommendations #13: Consider Formalizing PD Opportunities for PhD students**

*We commend Nipissing university for affording graduate students many learning opportunities outside the regular academic classroom. Yet, we recommend that the Faculty of Graduate Studies in collaboration with the new Dean of Teaching consider developing a formalized co-curricular program for graduate students similar to the 'transferable skills' programs in the UK. The idea is that the most competitive graduate programs are those that prepare students not just for an academic career, let alone for a single job elsewhere, but for adaptability, flexibility and success in all areas of life (for example, how can research findings be communicated to non-academic audiences, how can doctoral level research expertise be communicated to future employers, etc.)*

In the past, GSE has introduced several initiatives to support graduate student culture including monthly meetings, a graduate student blog, graduate student orientation. However, COVID 19 for the past two years has greatly hindered progress in building collegiality among the PhD cohorts. Year 1 and Year 2 cohorts continue to informally meet via social media to build, strengthen, and encourage each other in their PhD journeys. However, contact is often dependent on the perspective and willingness of cohort members to be engaged in the development of a community of learnership.

The PhD Summer Institute is immersive and expected to be onsite for 2022. During the 2022 institute, graduate student culture will be built collaboratively with each cohort through social gatherings, outside events, and wellness sessions.

Additionally, GSE will work directly with the School of Graduate Studies to explore formal opportunities for PhD students to participate in courses to teach, labs to instruct, articles researched and written for publication, and identification of sustained funding for conferences and presentations.

### **Recommendation #14: Develop recruitment and retention strategies for international students, MEd and PhD**

*At present, the percentage of international students studying at Nipissing University is very small. We recommend investing in recruitment strategies to attract more international students and also in retention strategies to support these international students once they have arrived. The strong online component in both the MEd and PhD programs might be a deterrent for international students on scholarships or those wishing to immigrate into Canada, who, when applying for a post-degree work permit, typically need to have taken face-to-face courses to demonstrate they were in Canada. We suggest exploring the possibility of an on-campus program option.*

Nipissing U has hired Laura Solano Moya to focus specifically on International Students. There have been meetings with EPS administration, Laura, and the SSoE Director to discuss the possibility of recruiting several cohorts of international students, particularly because the 2-year Study Visa would coincide nicely with our 2-year BEd program. The addition of such students from different countries would no doubt enrich our program, but will also require careful planning around accommodations, practicum placements, Ontario Curriculum/School familiarity, etc. These important issues are beginning to be explored by a BEd Program and Curriculum Committee.

In November 2021, the Chair of GSE put out a request to Graduate Faculty Members to engage their interest in and commitment to bringing a cohort of international students on campus beginning in the Fall 2023. To date, several Faculty have indicated a desire to teach in an onsite offering of graduate courses for international students, but none have volunteered to be on a committee to investigate the possibility and potential of creating an international graduate student cohort. The formation of an International Committee will appear as an item on the Agenda for the GSE Meeting in February 2022.

The recruitment and retention of international students is certainly worth investigating but it must be financially self-sustaining. Additionally, recruiting international students will require additional supports at the university-level, particularly with regard to flexibility in terms of start dates, onsite courses required, potential language issues, residency requirements, social and cultural community support networks, etc.



## LIST OF ACTION ITEMS LEADING UP TO NEXT REVIEW

- Faculty renewal based on retirements and projected needs
- Development of a seasonal, land-based experience for TCs involving indigenous/environmental education
- Addressing assessment/evaluation concerns during upcoming program review
- SSoE restructuring to best address workload realities of those in administrative/support positions

## CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS/NEXT STEPS – PLEASE ADD CONCLUDING SUMMARY REGARDING NEXT STEPS

Next steps leading up to a future review cycle include the annual hiring of new faculty in light of program needs; the stabilizing of our maximum intake numbers given the current teacher shortage in Ontario; the expansion of our Practicum Office staff in order to efficiently support such large numbers of students; and the modification of our SSoE staffing/administrative positions to best address the realities of workload following the recent faculty restructuring. Further work also remains to be done in assessment (grading), curriculum (required courses), international student recruitment (careful preparation), and the graduate programs (concentrations, supports).