

Two Year Progress Report

BES, MA, MES, MAES AND PHD IN PLANNING

June 2016

Background:

The augmented review report for the School of Planning, which covers all of our accredited programs and addresses both Provincial and accrediting body (Professional Standards Board of the Canadian Institute of Planning) requirements. The written report covers the period of Fall 2007 to Spring 2012, was submitted in July of 2013, and formed the foundation for the site visit which occurred in May of 2014 (with PSB site visit in March 2015). The final reviewers report did not include specific recommendations but it did draw attention to a number of issues which were subsequently addressed in the unit response to that review. The issues and our planned response to them are now updated in this progress report.

Progress on Implementation Plan:

1. Issue of Communications Course "PLAN 102"

Status: completed

Details: The course has been offered twice since the original review. The instructor consulted with School of Planning faculty, alumni employers, past students of the course, and CTE in revamping the course. Subsequent course ratings and student comments both support the positive changes that the instructor has initiated and this issue is resolved.

2. Faculty Course Load/Work Load

Status: in progress (see table below)

Details: The basis of this issue is faculty workload and the high student faculty ratio within our unit. The workplan indicated that we would develop a plan to expand our faculty complement by 2016. We are currently interviewing for a lectureship position to take on some of the pressure of teaching large practice oriented courses. We have also discussed with the Dean the potential to expand our complement in response to our sustained high enrollments. Over the past 5 years, our undergraduate 1st year enrolment has consistently exceeded initial targets. Although there is not a specific plan in place, in part because of the adjustments to the new budget model at University of

Waterloo, there is an understanding with the Dean's office that expanding our faculty numbers is a long term objective provided we maintain our current trajectory.

3. Issue of Mixed Grad/Undergraduate Courses

Status: in progress (see table below)

Details: There is a concern expressed around the number of 600 level graduate courses that mix undergraduate and graduate students. The work plan required we evaluate graduate student experience in mixed courses. We have initiated major changes in our graduate offerings in Fall 2015 to the MA/MES programs which have included more 700 level courses and few options for mixed courses. The Graduate officer will initiate an evaluation project in Winter of 2017 with reporting in Spring 2017

4. Issue of Urban Design Courses Student-Faculty Ratios

Status: in progress

Details: The issue concerns the high student-instructor ratios in our intensive design courses. The delay in addressing the work place presented in our response relates to a combination of sabbaticals and other leaves. We are committed to continuing to work towards resolving this issue as laid out in the table below. This work includes understanding how the core design courses fit into the broader planning degree learning outcomes and how they work as part of the urban design specialization.

5. Issue of Thesis completion times in revised MA/ MES degree

Status: completed

Details: The issue raised was our average time to completion for our professional Masters students (who also are required to complete a thesis) which stands at 2.5 years. The response was to provide timeline guidance for our students which we have – and monitoring and follow up which we have also initiated. Therefore, it is listed as “completed” rather than in progress. The monitoring and ongoing evaluation is an important element of the response.

6. Issue of face to face interaction in On-line Course Offerings

Status: completed

Details: The concern was raised about the potential for face to face interaction in our online courses. Our response explained the challenges this presents in terms of the appeal of an online program (for those that are geographically constrained). However, we did suggest a monitoring of our enrollments and satisfaction levels with course experiences to determine if this is an issue that needs a more focused response. Regular

review of course evaluations and discussion with course instructors is informing our assessment of the situation.

Updated Implementation Plan:

	Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions	Timeline for addressing Recommendations
1.	Faculty Course Load/Work Load	Expansion of School of Planning Faculty complement	Director SOP / Dean	2018
2.	Mixed Grad/Undergraduate Courses	Evaluate student experience	Graduate Officer SOP	2017
3.	Address Urban Design Courses Student-Faculty Ratios	define the learning outcomes in our core \specialization courses in design Approve proposed changes and implement official approval for (through course change process) Fall 2016	Director, Associate Chair Undergraduate SOP Design Course Instructors within School, Associate Chair Undergraduate	2017

The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan.

Report on anything else you believe is appropriate to bring to Senate concerning this program:

Overall, the programs remain very healthy and it is an exciting time to focus on our cities and communities. Enrollments in our undergraduate co-op program remain strong, exceeding target for the 5th year in a row. The major challenge for that program is the high demand for co-op work placements. Similarly, our graduate programs are vibrant, and also have increasing demands for the Masters level work experiences (work placements, internships etc.).