

Quality Assurance Monitoring (QAM) One-Year Report

Due April 5, 2023

	QAM Reviewer Recommendations	Action To Be Taken	Action Timeline	Status Update
1.	<p>For Senate to consider how the term 'program review' is interpreted in the application of its policy, particularly when reviewing the component parts of large degree programs (e.g. the Bachelor of Commerce).</p>	<p>Senate Policy on Program Review of Programs is regularly reviewed and revised every 7 years at a minimum. Review of this policy has been more frequently reviewed over the past decade with revisions drafted in 2014, 2016 and most recently 2019. As part of a comprehensive review throughout the 2018-2019 academic year, a Senate subcommittee was tasked to reconsider the interpretation of the term "program review" in specific reference to reviewing the component parts of large degree programs. While the term "program review" remained to be defined in its "broadest sense", a contextual distinction was made between the reviews of programs in a specific department or unit (e.g. Majors, minors, certificates) and programs reviewed in an entire Faculty (e.g. BComm, BSc, BA). In addition to defining the term, the processes involving the review of Faculty level reviews were considered and discussed. This proved to be a timely exercise since plans were already in place to review the core elements of the Bachelor of Commerce (BComm) degree program throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. As a process, it was decided that the review of Faculty level programs would follow those of the reviews of programs conducted at a department or unit level.</p> <p>While the review of Faculty-level programs is complex and multi-faceted, many valuable lessons were learned and continue to be learned from the process of engaging in the BComm program review this past year. Lessons learned included best practices in faculty-wide engagement in these reviews. As we continue to move through this process, we can continue to determine more specifically how to properly address the review of Faculty level programs and in this process hopefully continue to refine our definition of the term "program review".</p>	<p>Subsequent to the results of the BComm Program Review, which we expect will be completed approximately March 2021, an APC subcommittee will initiate a policy review in the 2021-2022 academic year.</p> <p>The program review policy went through a formative revision process in October 2022 and is currently being reviewed again for a further update to include a revised definition for program review.</p> <p>APC and Senate review ETA June 2023.</p>	<p>February 2023 Update: During the most current review of our policy, and in addressing the concern regarding the definition of program review in its broadest sense, the policy definition has been expanded to clearly articulate the inclusion of large degree program review. These and other revisions related to lessons learned and process improvements are pending Senate approval.</p>

<p>2. To consider how formal communications between Senate and Board can be improved, to facilitate decision making, together with ensuring appropriate representation from Faculty and Academic Support Units. This is particularly relevant where the allocation of resources is needed to support recommended changes as a result of program review.</p>	<p>The consensus at Saint Mary’s is that the enhancement of more formal connections between the Board and Senate are desirable in facilitating ongoing communication between the two governing bodies on current issues. The most viable suggestion that has been put forth by the Chair of the Senate ByLaws Committee and the Senate Secretary is that the Senate Chair (who is elected annually) assumes this role. However, there is a strong sentiment that the Chairperson to assume this role be a faculty member that is engaged in regular teaching, university processes, and has a firsthand knowledge of academic program review related process from both micro and macro perspectives. As opposed to an observer position, this Senate representative should be free to take part in full discussion and voting.</p> <p>Other requirements for this role would be the ability to transcend disciplinary and faculty specific concerns when participating in Board level discussions. This would ensure that the role is one that advocates for the excellence and integrity of all programs in all faculties and to the advancement of the University as an institution of higher learning. Furthermore, this role would help ensure advocacy for faculty and student concerns relating to the excellence of academic programs and academic integrity that may not make it to the Board otherwise.</p> <p>Other recent avenues of information sharing between Faculty and the Board that have already been actioned are assisting in helping to identify synergies of interest that may serve as a conduit in connecting institutional research initiatives to further opportunities external to the university. As an example, researchers at Saint Mary’s deliver presentations to the Board on a regular basis. This is an opportunity for Board members to understand the work that is being done and may trigger further opportunities for engagement.</p> <p>Another example that has already been actioned over the past three years, is the hosting of an annual event to bring the Board, Senate, and SMUSA together for an evening of presentations, open discussions, and network exchange. These events have proven to be successful and impactful with at least two faculty</p>	<p>Currently in planning and development (2020-2021)</p> <p>Completed as of January 2022.</p>	<p>January 2022: As of January 1, 2022, Saint Mary’s University has established a University Secretariat under the leadership of Claire Milton, University Secretary and Senior Director, Legal Services. The Secretariat will be the office responsible for overseeing the effective and efficient operation of a shared system of university governance, providing governance and administrative support to both the Board of Governors and the Senate. One of the responsibilities of the Secretariat is providing administrative support for the coordination and facilitation of the activities of Senate and the Board of Governors and their various committees, to ensure the effective cross-training and communication in the operation of the University’s bicameral system of governance. This change follows a lengthy examination of best practices, models in place at comparable higher education institutions, and consideration of our internal governance structures.</p>
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<p>3.</p>	<p>To continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the revised institutional management structure and the newly designated roles within this, to monitor its effectiveness in quality assurance and enhancement of the student experience.</p>	<p>Progress toward the University Strategic Plan and the Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) plan is being made. In both these plans there is a clear need and expectation of program review and renewal. Currently, with the SEM plan, we are working on the development of key goals, objectives, and outcomes, along with trackable metrics, to assess progress toward our goals.</p>	<p>Projected completion originally scheduled by the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.</p> <p>Completed Fall 2021.</p> <p>A completed university strategic plan will be in place by the end of the calendar year.</p>	<p>February 2023 Update: The SEM Plan was adopted in Fall 2021 and has been in the implementation phase since this time. The plan can be found here and will be active until 2030 (with an expected interim review). All aspects of the SEM plan are designed to improve the student experience at Saint Mary's. The impact of this plan will be measured by increases in rates of retention and graduation and through changes in results on institutional surveys such as CUSC and NSSE.</p> <p>The revised University Strategic Plan had been paused to seek further consultation with Faculty. We now have this feedback and input, and the draft will be written in its final format. The existing University Strategic Plan can be found here and will continue to be followed while revisions are underway for a revised 2023-2029 Strategic Plan that will be submitted to Senate and the Board for approval within this calendar year.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>To continue the development of data capacity and</p>	<p>Institutional Data Analysis and Planning (IDAP) is working closely with Financial services to connect SMU's enrolment and financial data. We have created a course enrolment report and</p>	<p>Various project completion dates set throughout 2020-</p>	<p>February 2023 Update: Creation of annual reports has almost been completed. Currently moving into</p>

	<p>capability to promote informed decision making at all levels within SMU, this is necessary to enable timely and agile responses to specific events (such as the Covid-19 pandemic)</p>	<p>have uploaded the data into Vena to run numerous analyses, so we can better gauge registrations for upcoming terms. This information is shared with EMG on a weekly basis. Some additional action areas are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of annual department reports that will include 5 years of data on registrations, majors/minors/, graduates, grade distribution/DFW rates, etc. ‘ • Data visualization tools are being examined to determine which one best meets our needs for sharing data with senior management, faculty and staff. (Tableau and Power BI). • We are exploring Ellucian products that will expand/enhance our data analytics capability by connecting our various database systems. 	<p>2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023.</p>	<p>the consultation/ sharing phase. Annual reports will be capturing 10 years of data to create a clearer picture on data trends. The last 3 years includes our “Covid-data” that skews the 5-year image.</p> <p>Power BI will be used as a data visualization tool to share “live” reports.</p> <p>Still exploring Ellucian products with a focus around “insights” and “reporting”.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Ensure that the above incorporates technology enabled learning and learning analytics, which evaluate the usage and effectiveness of different resources and modes of delivery. This will promote individualised learning, in line with the values of diversity held by SMU, such as enabling more customized and differentiated learning for diverse student cohorts.</p>	<p>In addition to what was noted above in #4, we are also working to develop more effective predictive analytics programs. We began an initial approach using data from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and have now purchased a predictive analytics package which will be rolled out in 2021. This approach will allow us to more quickly identify students at risk. The COVID-19 reality has also caused us to move all courses online so the need to enhance approaches to technology enabled learning is paramount. We have begun a program to enhance the quality and availability to online education, and we are working, using some of the tools described above (e.g., Tableau) to more effectively harness data from our learning management system and thus support student learning and success.</p>	<p>Various project completion dates set throughout 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023.</p>	<p>February 2023 Update: After further exploration, we are repositioning our approach to predictive analytics. We are now using our own internal information to create these internal analytics.</p> <p>We are now working with different areas within the University. Institutional Analysis is taking the lead on this project and is focusing on using internal data to create an enrolment model as a first step and the factors that go into identifying student risk will follow.</p> <p>For example: If we look at students that have poor grades, we can investigate further to see if the “at risk students” have financial holds on their student accounts. A financial hold could mean that the student is experiencing problems related to their finances, which could ultimately affect their education (more time working, less time studying).</p>

<p>6.</p>	<p>To provide a more systematic induction and orientation for newly appointed faculty members regarding institutional policies and procedures. This will encourage engagement with, and appreciation of, the program review process.</p>	<p>Although new faculty members are usually not expected to participate on self-study committees during their period of onboarding, plans are in the works to include more new faculty members in the program review orientation program workshops that are held every April.</p> <p>The Studio for Teaching and Learning has also established a formal and integrated year-long orientation program for newly appointed faculty. Within this program, it would be worth exploring how to better facilitate the introduction of the concepts of program quality assurance and program enhancement. This could include the development of workshops that focus on important elements of best curriculum and classroom-based practices that feed into the quality assurance process. Such workshop themes could be in the areas of curriculum design, assessment practices, and active learning pedagogies. In addition, workshops could also offer support in relating better and best practices in approaching formative evaluations in the classroom (see recommendation #9).</p> <p>This recommendation has been forwarded to the Senate Standing Committee on Learning and Teaching (SCoLT) for their consideration and advice in the 2020-2021 academic year.</p>	<p>Added to SCoLT meeting agenda for November 6 2020 (targeting 2021-2022 academic year)</p> <p>Workshop planning to commence May 2023 in anticipation of revised Policy approval in June 2023.</p>	<p>February 2023 Update: As the pandemic situation has begun to ease, we are returning to more regular scheduled planning for expansive professional development workshop opportunities for our newly appointed faculty. The Academic Program Development and Review Office is currently working with both the Studio for Teaching and Learning, and some select experienced faculty members within each of our three faculties to host a series of workshops focusing on curriculum design and development including assessment practices and active learning pedagogies. Our revised program review policy and process will be introduced in an integrated capacity within these sessions with a special focus on some core self-study framework elements that capture the concepts of constructive alignment in course design and delivery.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>To streamline the new course proposal process, so that innovation and change are facilitated where appropriate. This could be supported by the introduction of templates to ensure consistency and transparency of relevant documentation.</p>	<p>As in the case with the program review process, the course proposal process is also regularly reviewed. Although templates are in existence and are also regularly updated, there is often misunderstanding about the course proposal process. Much of this misunderstanding is the result of misinformation and miscommunication. In an effort for more clarity around this process, plans are being made to work closely with ITSS to identify if online access to course proposal process information can be improved to link interested stakeholders to information and policies that they require. This will involve considerations on how to enhance more interconnected links in documents and policies. The Senate Curriculum Committee is currently tasked with reviewing and updating 8-1013_Senate Policy on Submissions to the Senate Curriculum Committee, to include revision and creation of templates. The CourseLeaf software program is</p>	<p>By the end of academic year (2020-2021).</p> <p>Program software implementation complete as of Fall 2022.</p>	<p>February 2023 Update: As of the fall of 2022, the CourseLeaf software program is fully implemented at SMU. The program provides templates to ensure consistency and transparency of the workflow status of all new and modified course and program proposals. After three or four cycles, the process will be reviewed for further streamlining wherever possible.</p>

		<p>currently being implemented and will significantly improve the curriculum revision and addition processes.</p>		
<p>8.</p>	<p>To strengthen the communications strategy and its delivery modes for both staff and students, to ensure that information is communicated to all relevant parties in a timely and accurate manner. For example, the use of a sole and designated medium and address for all formal communications.</p>	<p>The university continues to make investments in communications at Saint Mary’s University. In 2018, the university added the position of Internal Communications Officer, responsible for overseeing communications to staff and faculty. In 2019, the university added the Student Communications Officer who builds strategic communications plans and executes communications for students. The addition of these two important positions demonstrates that the university is placing a priority on internal communications to all audiences: faculty, staff and students.</p> <p>The Student Communications Officer is chairing a new working team under the university’s Student Success Committee, focusing on Student Communications & Engagement. Other initiatives include the new social media channels known as Student Life, started in July 2020. The channels combine information that was previously spread over several separate channels. The new channels are experiencing better results in terms of reach and engagement. This is being measured and reported. Student Life will also have a new web presence, to go live in Fall 2020. This webpage will replace outdated webpages and bring greater web clarity and access to information for current students. All students now receive the #SMUCommunity Bulletin, a weekly newsletter of stories, updates and timely news for the entire Saint Mary’s community. The Student Communications Officer is also working with departments across the university to develop systems and processes for better internal collaboration, which will lead to an enhanced communication experience for students.</p> <p>Faculty and staff are also receiving the weekly #SMUCommunity Bulletin. There are frequent mass emails to all faculty and staff from members of the executive management group (EMG) ensuring that they receive information in a timely and consistent manner. Members of EMG regularly hold virtual town halls with high participation and engagement from both faculty and staff. This is a new practice begun during the pandemic, evolved from the more traditional in-person town halls that were held in previous years on campus. In response to the pandemic the</p>	<p>Currently in planning and development (2020-2021)</p> <p>Weekly SMU Bulletin</p> <p>Communication initiated in April 2020. Frequency of Town Halls has increased since May 2020. Virtual platform has resulted in increased community participation. Town Hall sessions are now recorded and posted on the SMU website for campus wide access.</p> <p>Work in this area continues to be formative and under cyclical monitoring.</p>	<p>February 2023 Update: SMU Community Bulletins (e-bulletins) are sent twice a month via email. One version is customized to faculty and staff, and the other to students.</p> <p>This continues to be a very successful communications channel as evidenced by the open rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faculty and staff: 60.6% - Students: 48.6% <p>Faculty and staff virtual Town Halls continue to be a valued format for both sharing updates with faculty and staff, and hearing concerns and answering questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2022, we held 6 Town Halls - Avg attendance: 225 <p>The official SMU social media channels are extremely successful based on followers and engagement. Faculty, staff and students all follow these channels:</p> <p>Followers Facebook: 23,553 Twitter: 13,300 Instagram: 10, 800 LinkedIn: 49,000</p> <p>Engagement Facebook – 80,526 Twitter – 8,187 Instagram – 10,145</p>

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<p>9.</p>	<p>To develop greater opportunities for the student voice to be heard and ensure that students are aware of how their feedback in evaluations and surveys is responded to.</p>	<p>1. The context of this recommendation seemed to stem from the student meeting session where it was reported that students “<i>were not particularly happy...with what they perceived to be the utility of student evaluations; they did not see that these were effective instruments to measure their classroom experience or to improve it if improvement was needed</i>” (pg. 12). The evaluation tool referenced here is the Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE) survey conducted in all credit classes at the end of each semester. Students cited similar issues with our previous evaluation instrument over a decade ago. At that time, the predecessor of the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching (SCoLT) undertook a significant review of evaluation instruments being utilized by the postsecondary sector and after significant research and consultation, they decided to use an instrument developed by Dr. Herbert March of the University of</p>	<p>1. Senate Sub-committee review of instructor course evaluation tool and process initiated October 2020.</p> <p>Planning and development (2020-2021)</p> <p>Further planning and development 2022 2023.</p>	<p><u>January 2022:</u></p> <p>1. The issue of the Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE) management has been under formative discussions throughout the past year in considering how best to change the culture and thinking at SMU on the evaluation of teaching. As there are some inherent collective agreement implications with some of the suggestions that have been put forward, this is an issue that must be part of a collaborative agreement between the University and the Faculty Union.</p>

	<p>Western Sydney, Australia, known as the “Student’s Evaluation of Educational Quality” (SEEQ). In an ongoing effort in our review process, a Senate Sub-committee has been tasked with reviewing the ICE tool and related evaluation processes.</p> <p>While there is undoubtedly great value in the summative feedback received from the ICE survey results, Saint Mary’s is striving to promote effective evaluation tools and approaches to more formatively monitor student attitudes and enhance student voice in their overall learning process and campus experience. As an example, we have just released an early term survey designed to monitor student experiences learning remotely during the Covid pandemic. The Senate Sub-committee cited above has also been tasked with exploring functionality of software programs that will enable efficient campus wide formative evaluation.</p>		<p>We are in the midst of bringing this to the attention of both parties involved. Further progress is expected in the summer of 2022 as the Collective Bargaining negotiation process commences.</p> <p>*Further to the update above, the following actions were taken below:</p> <p>February 2023 Update:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Program Review Office has developed enhanced student survey tools for faculty to better support the program review process. <p>In addition to the above, to attempt to capture student voice in evaluations and surveys, revisions to submission templates for new and modified courses are planned to provide space for instructors to respond to the question of whether revisions were an outcome of the evaluation or survey processes.</p> <p>To enhance the transparency of the program review process and provide students access to program review outcomes, the Academic Program Development and Review Office is expanding its website to create a location for posting program review outcomes (to include the Senate Summary Document, the Action Plan and the subsequent follow-up reports).</p>
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			<p>Further planning and development currently continuing in 2022-2023.</p>	<p>reflection. This involves the constant and intentional process of looking back on, and critically reviewing our teaching experiences and assumptions that inform our practice as teachers. In a reflective review, we become deeply aware, not only of what we are teaching, but also how and why. In addition to our personal experience, we learn how students respond to, or are affected by our teaching, as well as learn through our colleagues’ perceptions. Reflection thus is an important catalyst for teachers’ professional and personal development and growth”.</p> <p>This renewed focus on reflective practice will be implemented as part of our longer-term strategy in enhancing more faculty-to-student engagement.</p> <p>*Further to the update above, the following actions were taken below:</p> <p>February 2023 Update:</p> <p>2. Building upon the “Reflective Teaching Practice Symposium” (outlined above and successfully hosted last year), an additional “Learning from each other: Reflections at the Crossroads” symposium was offered to discuss issues related to faculty experiences in “navigating the continually shifting</p>
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				modes of course delivery” as a result of the pandemic. The symposium fostered a series of round table discussions, informed by student feedback, on how faculty have dealt with challenges in teaching and supporting learning. Discussions also centered on addressing imperatives for accessibility and inclusion in the way that our faculty teach their courses. The symposium round table sessions were well attended by both faculty and academic support staff.
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