

Appendix D

Senate's Five-Year Academic Plan (2006-2011)

The Academic Planning Committee of Senate makes annual recommendations to Senate for programme renewal, and the Strategic Plan has largely been built around these recommendations. Here follows Senate's Academic Planning Committee's most recent five-year plan.

Algoma University College Five- Year Academic Plan (2006-2011)

I. Introduction:

The report begins with a brief discussion of some of the assumptions incorporated in the report, and the priorities entailed by these assumptions. Next we present an overview of some of the promising program developments at AUC, both those already under way and those in the planning stage. Then we present a set of program-by-program recommendations for the coming five-year period. This is followed by a discussion of a number of issues related to academic planning in general, with the Committee's recommendations for those areas. After offering a final set of general recommendations, the report closes with an appendix containing detailed data for the past four years on revenues and costs, enrolments, and class sizes by department.

II. Assumptions and Priorities:

The current climate of Ontario universities is such that additional resources are contingent upon increased enrolments. Enrolment increases are also the *sine qua non* of future independence initiatives. Therefore -- in keeping with previous plans -- our first priority must be enrolment increases, especially in first-year enrolments. In the past five years, total student enrolment has grown from 835 students to the current 1081 students, for a 23% growth rate during this time. In addition, student full-time equivalents (SFTEs) have grown from 654 to 842 STEs -- or 29% -- during this time period.

Dependence on the local or regional (Northeastern Ontario) catchment area has become increasingly challenged by a number of factors, that include (a) shrinking population, (b) low educational levels, (c) low participation rates. Looking back to 2001, the population of 394,655 (3.5% of Ontario's population) -- the Algoma, Cochrane, Manitoulin and Sudbury (ACMS) region -- has substantially declined (- 6 %) since 1996, compared to the rest of the province, which had experienced +6.1% growth. Since the time of the last census (2001), population shrinkage continues in this region. In 2004, only 13% of Northeastern Ontarians aged 20-64 have a university certificate, diploma or degree -- only slightly more than half the education level of those in Southern Ontario.

Undergraduate student participation in Northeastern Ontario is significantly lower than the participation rate in Southern Ontario, based on 2001 census data. With a small local market at some distance from the bulk of the Ontario population, within a community with a lack of economic diversification, an aging population and youth out-migration, AUC faces immense challenges to growth at Algoma.

To be sure, the University has increased its success in capturing a larger percentage of Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma region high-school students; however, increases in local recruitment will not be able to produce the enrolment increases the University requires for sustainable success. At present, 63% of our student body is from the Algoma region, with 25% out-of-region and 12% international students. Recruitment expanding beyond the local/regional market is key for our success, including: (a) Central and Southern Ontario, (b) International markets, (c) First Nations and other aboriginal groups, (d) Second-degree and mature students, and (e) CAAT transfers.

Outreach to expand our catchment is key to growth and success, including the necessary resource-allocation for doing so. AppCom acknowledges that quality academic programs that serve student and societal needs remain the key to program growth and success. The committee acknowledges the “bootstrapping problem” of this issue; that is, we must develop new programs within the constraints of existing resources. In other words, enrolment increases must precede new investment in programs. The challenge is to develop academic programs within existing resources that will attract enrolment from the aforementioned groups.

Academic Objectives. From these considerations, the following future directions for our academic program development emerge:

- Maintenance of a strong core of programs in established areas to both serve the regional population and appeal to international students. This means continuing to offer quality Specialized (Honours) degree programs. In addition, expanding general degree programs to Specialized (Honours) programs, when justified by student and societal need, should be pursued.
- Development of niche programs – distinctive from similar programs elsewhere – in order to attract new students from outside the region. The University must endeavour to pool interdisciplinary strengths within the University, and build partnerships with regional intellectual resource-bases in order to build capacity where it is otherwise limited.
- Maintenance of systematic program evaluation and review with the purpose of continuous quality improvement within the fiscal means for such improvement.
- Development of further collaboration with other educational and research-oriented institutions in Ontario and abroad to fortify our educational offerings and research-capacity.
- Diversification of the student body in an effort to foster a university of excellence that is inclusive of all cultures. This includes increasing access to student populations previously disadvantaged by economics and geography. This includes:

- maintenance and support of indigenous content across the curriculum, as well as concentration in Indigenous Studies
- off-site offerings and other distance delivery methods to access remote populations.
- development of inter-institutional partnerships that make possible brokered graduate degrees
- Continue to improve our retention rate from 57% (2004), to 71% (2005), to the provincial average of 88%, by offering personalized attention to quality students, through academic offerings marked by quality and currency. Moreover, improve our graduation rate from 36.8% (2004) to the provincial average of 73.1%.
- Maintenance of high quality teaching -- with small classes (where appropriate), responsive to a range of learning styles, and personal attention to our students – whilst maintaining financial viability
- Supporting the necessary allocation of quality faculty resources to achieve program development and success,
 - by improving institutional support for instructional budget allocations to the provincial benchmark of 55%
 - by improving our success in getting our best and most experienced faculty to teach introductory foundation courses, from 47% to 80%
 - by hiring new faculty with PhD (or terminal degree) and research program, improving our standing of 60% to >85%
 - by fostering a culture aimed at scholarly and research achievement through institutional commitments to research seed-funding, establishment of faculty research programs and performance expectations of scholarly productivity

Measurables by June 2007:

- Completion of UPRAC-regulated External Reviews for five academic programs
- Delivery of several new programs that include (a) B.Sc. (General) BIOL, (b) B.A. (Honours) History, (c) B.A. (Combined Specialization: Law and Politics), (d) brokered M.Sc. CGT (Abertay)
- Development of several new programs that include (a) B. Design (collaborative degree with SCAAT), (b) B. Fine Arts (Honours), (c) B.A. (General) Anishnaabe Studies. Delivery of these new programs will commence in Fall 2007.
- Expanded student body, reflected by increased outreach in northeastern Ontario and international markets, including Asia
- Reduce the percentage of classes with 1-25 students from >80% to <75%, whilst maintaining personalized attention to students.
- Increase research success of faculty, by (a) doubling rate of faculty success on research grants, (b) increasing, by 20%, research grant funds garnered by faculty, (c) double rate of application for Tri-Council Funding (SSHRC, NSERC, and CIHR).

III. Academic Initiatives and Developments

The Academic Planning and Priorities Committee of Senate has made annual recommendations to Senate for programme approvals and evaluations; the University Strategic Plan has largely been built around these AppCom recommendations. Looking back over the past five years, AppCom acknowledges the institutional foci of 2001/02; for example, the Carr-Gordon proposal of a “larger regionally relevant university focused on growth in new programs, dedicated to student success and leading in partnerships, collaborations, and reputation for excellence and results in its community.” Today, AppCom embraces the new vision of the University as one “...of international distinction enriching generations of diverse cultures and communities.” Consistent with this vision, AppCom endorses academic initiatives that are marked by quality programming, an appeal to diverse student populations and situated within a community context that will support our graduates. AppCom espouses the belief that societal and student demand will principally govern institutional commitment to academic initiatives; hence, resource allocations may be diverted from those areas with a dearth of such demand toward academic areas of promise, with respect to societal and student demand.

At present, AppCom’s course and program considerations include:

- a) Bachelor of Science (General) Biology
- b) Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) in (i) Visual Art and Culture, (ii) Music
- c) Bachelor of Design (collaborative degree with SCAAT)
- d) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) History
- e) Bachelor of Arts (Honours -- Combined Specialization) Law and Politics
- f) Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Sociology
- g) Bachelor of Arts (General) Anishnaabe Studies

In addition, AppCom acknowledges a number of academic initiatives that involve off-site delivery or brokered programmes. These include:

- a) Master of Science (Computer Games Technology) – University of Abertay (Brokered)
- b) Master of Business Administration (Community Economic Development) – UCCB
- c) Bachelor of Arts (IT or COSC) – India

VI. Program Recommendations

The following are program-by-program assessments and prescriptions for five-year term 2006-2011). Table 1 summarizes the programme development recommended for this five-year term:

Table 27 AppCom 2006-2011 recommendations for programme development

MAINTAIN	DEVELOP	REVIEW	SERVICE
ADMN COSC ECON ENGL FREN GEOG PSYC SOCI	BIOL CESD FINA HIST JURI/POLI	ITEC LIB SCI OJIB MATH MUSC	ANTR CHMI ESPA ITAL PHIL PHYS SWLF

Business Administration, Computer Science, Economics, English, French, Geography, Psychology and Sociology: **Maintain**

Academic departments are expected undertake internal programme evaluation and review and to propose improvements to AppCom on an ongoing basis. Sociology degree is slated for development of an Honours program proposal in 2006/07, following which it will be considered in the “develop” category. Computer Science department seminal in off-site delivery prospects and brokered M.Sc. CGT

Fine Arts: **Develop**

Completion of the B Design and LU approvals scheduled for June 2006.
Completion of the BFA and LU approvals scheduled for September 2006.
Implementation date for both the B. Design and BFA is September 2007.

Biology: **Develop**

Build upon (a) B.Sc. (General) Biology and, (b) community partnerships with research-oriented organizations. Develop long range plans of establishing B.Sc. (Honours) Biology for preparation of graduates toward forestry or medicine careers.

Community Economic and Social Development: **Develop**

Explore further recruitment possibilities, through CAAT articulations and outreach. Continue to support retention efforts. Investigate prospects of brokered MBA

Law and Justice/Political Sciences: **Develop**

Ensure adequate resource allocation for the offering of the B.A. (Honours – Combined Specialization) Law and Politics, by September 2006. Re-address collaborative degree with SCAAT (BA - Police Sciences) in September 2007.

History: Develop

Ensure adequate resource allocation for the offering of the B.A. (Honours) History, by September 2006.

ITEC: Review

Joint program-review – Business Administration and Computer Science – currently underway, including program revision. Revision aimed at program growth, societal and student demand. Forthcoming in Spring 2006 with implementation of program revisions by September 2007.

Liberal Science: Review

Within context of 2006/07 scheduled self-study and external program review, this program will be assessed and recommendations considered by AppCom.

Mathematics, Ojibwe: Review

AppCom requests (by June 2007) departmental plans to (a) enhance upper-year class sizes from the current 9-11 TO 15-20 students, and (b) enhance number of BA-concentrations from 7 to >15. In addition, plans to enhance the B.Sc. (MATH) from 9 concentrations to >15. Implementation will be worked out in consultation with Administration.

With respect to OJIB, departmental plans are to include (i) the incorporation of OJIB language courses in the proposed B.A. (General) Anishnaabe Studies, (ii) marketing/liaison recommendations, alternative-delivery models and program rationalization, by June 2006. The proposed Anishnaabe Studies B.A. program curriculum is to be presented to AppCom by March 2006.

AppCom will re-evaluate program status within the 2006/07 academic year and proffer categorical recommendations on these programs.

Music: Review

Completion of the BFA (Music) proposal and LU approvals scheduled for September 2006. Implementation is slated for September 2007. Transition from a BA (General) Music, to BFA (Specialization – Music) may involve discontinuance of BA (General) Music; dissimilar course-offerings between the programs would be the basis for this consideration. Otherwise, these programs could co-exist.

Anthropology, Chemistry, Spanish, Italian, Philosophy, Physics, and Social Welfare: Service

Service offerings are seminal to a liberal arts education and the University will continue to offer a wide-array of courses for this purpose. Moreover, these disciplines are integral to current degree programs and certificates. As such, the

University continues to support such offerings, within existing budgetary constraints.

VI. Overview and Conclusions

Summarizing these recommendations, the Humanities Division will be focusing its resources on the development and delivery of new programs in Fine Arts and History, as well as maintaining a strong program in English program. The Social Sciences will be focusing its resources on the development and delivery of new programs in Law and Politics, whilst maintaining a strong ADMN program, and nascent programs in CESD and Finance and Economics. In Sciences, continued strengths in Psychology and Computer Science will be supported, as well as the development and delivery of the B.Sc. General and Honours Biology. AppCom looks forward to reviewing proposals from Anishnaabe Studies and Sociology (Honours) B.A. All divisions will be mindful of societal and student demand in their course and program offerings, and developments.

AppCom's recommendations are consequential in several respects. First, approvals for new program initiatives carry with them obligations for resource-provisions, including faculty, technology, equipment, library resources, etc. These supports are necessarily governed by limited financial resources making such support at the expense of programs that have been less successful in attracting students. Program growth, therefore, becomes a critical index in the evaluation of programs as well as prospective programs. Second, maintenance of our current levels of strength will require sustained resource allocation and any effort to ignore this reality will undoubtedly come with sacrifices in program quality. To circumvent this, additional resources to support nascent and developing programs must be supported by a growth in our student body, a matter that is of collective interest to all academic programs. Thirdly, planning and budget priorities considerations -- within a University context -- are necessarily constrained by a paucity of resources amidst a vast array of program possibilities. Our considerations are importantly informed by extensive input (from both departments and divisions), together with objective (i.e., quantitative) data on institutional, provincial, national indices. In this light, AppCom has balanced possibilities with constraints, into this five-year plan for immediate and long-term success.