

Implementation Report for the 2021-2022 Cyclical Review of the Department of Health Sciences Programs

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INTRODUCTION

This is the first implementation report for the cyclical review of the Department of Health Sciences undergraduate program that took place in 2021-2022. The full language for each recommendation from the External Reviewers' Report has been included, along with the corresponding information about implementation from the Final Assessment Report. For each recommendation, the unit has provided an update on the progress or action made toward the implementation of that recommendation, followed by comments from the relevant dean(s) and the Program Review Sub-Committee. Taking into account the updates provided by the unit and the comments from the dean(s), the Program Review Sub-Committee will review the report and determine if all recommendations have been implemented satisfactorily or if a subsequent report will be required.

RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
1. Consider opportunities to operationalise the “cell to society” concept explicitly and early , as this is a key strength and uniqueness of Laurier’s Health Sciences program.	Department	n/a	Fall 2025 (coinciding with the launch of the Milton program)

Unit Update: The “cell to society” approach has become a defining feature of the Department of Health Sciences and the design of its academic programming. In everyday terms, we explain this as understanding how social experiences “get under the skin” to affect biology and health across the lifespan. A concrete example of the ways in which this recommendation has been implemented is a Cell to Society Special Topics course, taught by Nicolas Rouleau in Winter 2023. Students in the third and fourth year were engaged as partners in curriculum review, evaluating departmental courses for their integration of a cell to society perspective. They developed case studies with concrete recommendations for how individual courses could evolve to better reflect this approach. The Department has taken student recommendations from this course and has been systematically implementing them into undergraduate courses. Additionally, the Department’s two MSc in Health Sciences programs and the proposed PhD are all built around a cell to society approach. We believe that these actions

satisfy the intent of the recommendation and further strengthen the Department’s commitment to its cell to society ‘brand’.

Dean of Science Comments: The Department appears to have taken this recommendation seriously as they reviewed each course in the Program and implemented appropriate changes. The use of senior students in the program through a Special Topics course was extremely innovative: this “partnering” with their students reflects a strong commitment to providing a strong and impactful Program. This engagement and periodic review is encouraged to continue, particularly as the discipline continues to develop and grow.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The comments provided by the Department indicate that the intent of this recommendation – to make the programs’ “cell-to-society” approach explicit to students in the program – has been accomplished. The comments provided speak to examples in the senior years of the undergraduate program and the Department is encouraged to also consider the ways in which the “cell-to-society” approach could be embedded in 100- and 200-level courses as well. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
<p>2. Review grade data for required courses in the Health Sciences program to identify courses where there are inconsistencies between sections, or courses where student performance is lower than might be reasonably expected given their overall academic performance. If the perceptions are substantiated by this review, cross-unit consultation and collaboration may be required to achieve appropriate resolution.</p>	<p>Department (in consultation with Dean of Science Office as necessary)</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>End of summer 2023</p>

Unit Update: This recommendation was specific to a particular course required in the BSc in Health Sciences program but being taught outside of the Department of Health Sciences. The successful outcome of this situation since the cyclical program review was a recognition that the curriculum needs of Health Sciences students necessitated this course to be taught in-house. This change has been made and thus, this recommendation has been completed.

Dean of Science Comments: Appropriate action was taken to address this issue. While it is unfortunate that it required the teaching of the course material required to offering of distinct courses, the need to provide distinct emphases of the subject matter is recognized and understood.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: All comments provided indicate that this issue has been resolved; the recommendation is considered to be completed.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
3. As the program grows and new programming is considered, review faculty and staff complement and student advising capacity relative to program size in the Laurier context in order to ensure that the quality of the program is not compromised, and the growth is sustainable.	Department, Dean of Science	Faculty of Science	Fall 2025 (coinciding with the launch of the Milton program)

Unit Update: Since the review took place, the Department has added 5 full-time faculty and 1.0 FTE of staff support. In addition, the new graduate program(s) (current MSc and planned PhD) are supported by the addition of a Graduate Coordinator. These additions have made a significant contribution to balancing out the increased enrolment in the undergraduate program and the addition of the MSc in Health Sciences program. In addition, a more sustainable and efficient approach to student advising than at the time of the review has implemented into the Department. All this being said, if the Department continues on its current growth trajectory, it will be imperative to continue to grow its staff and faculty resources to support students' academic success and the unit's reputation of excellence.

Dean of Science Comments: As noted, the Faculty and University have recognized the continuing interest in, and growth of, this Program and have responded accordingly with the provision of new positions. This opportunity has attracted excellent applicants leading to the hiring of very strong and fully engaged new faculty members, that not only support the undergraduate Program, but have led to the development of a new MSc program. The Faculty is committed to continue monitoring the growth of the Program to respond appropriately.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: It is very encouraging to hear that as the Department has expanded its programming and enrolment has increased, it has been able to grow its faculty and staff complement in conjunction. No further reporting is required on this recommendation.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
4. Carefully examine the adequacy of library resources addressing the content areas of the curriculum and faculty research in the HSP, particularly if a graduate program is developed.	Department, Library	Library, if necessary	Summer 2023 (coinciding with the launch of the planned MSc program)

Unit Update: As part of the development of the MSc in Health Sciences program, a review of library resources was conducted. This revealed that additional resources (i.e. books and EMBASE) were necessary and \$38,000 was

added to the program budget to support these acquisitions. An additional library review was conducted in 2025 in support of the development of the PhD in Health Sciences program and the adequacy of Library holdings to support all the Department of Health Science programs will be included as part of the next cyclical program review.

Dean of Science Comments: This recommendation has been addressed appropriately, especially considering the context of the funding situation within the University, and beyond in the sector.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: With the development of new graduate programs since the cyclical program review took place, there have been multiple opportunities to examine the adequacy of library resources relevant to Health Sciences through the Library Reports prepared in support of these new programs. This recommendation, while an ongoing one, is considered completed for reporting purposes.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
5. Review teaching assignments for cross-appointees to ensure equity between departments and appropriate service commitments for faculty members.	Department Chair	Dean, Faculty of Science	Summer 2023	With completion of course build and workload assignments for 2023-24 academic year.

Unit Update: Since the 2021-2022 review and with the addition of five new full-time faculty members, the Department has become less reliant on cross-appointments to meet its teaching needs. This recommendation, therefore, is not as relevant as it was when the review took place and is not currently considered an area of concern. To ensure that service loads are balanced, an annual review of service is conducted each year while making committee appointments.

Dean of Science Comments: Again, the action of the Department and Faculty in hiring additional faculty members has addressed this recommendation appropriately.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: All comments suggest that this recommendation has been satisfied through the growth in HE faculty and the related decrease on the use of cross-appointments for teaching in the program. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
6. The HSP should gather and analyze additional retrospective and	Department	n/a	End of summer 2023

<p>prospective data about year-to-year attrition rates to more fully document and understand the reasons that apparent attrition rates seem higher than expected given the caliber of students admitted to the HSP and the other indicators of strong student performance. Such an analysis would provide insight to inform appropriate intervention, if necessary.</p>			
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Unit Update: The Department has further investigated issues of program attrition since the last cyclical program review, gaining a better understanding of these data. What this analysis revealed is that when students are leaving the Health Sciences program, it is most commonly for other programs within the Faculty of Science, so there is no net loss to the Faculty as a whole. As a program often used as preparation for further professional (e.g. medical, dental) programming, there are some students who are concerned about the difficulty of particular HE courses and their impact on their GPA for admission to post-graduate programming. Given the overall number of undergraduate students in the Department (~1000), some attrition is to be expected and the majority of these students are being retained by the Faculty of Science.

Dean of Science Comments: The Department is encouraged to continue reviewing student performance to catch any courses that might pose particular/specific problems regarding attrition.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The committee agrees with the Dean of Science that overall program attrition and progression rates should continue to be monitored in order to inform any curricular adjustments necessary to support student retention; however, no further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
<p>7. It will be valuable for the HSP to undertake a strategic planning process to ensure that there is a strong, coherent vision for the Program and that the considerable strengths of the undergraduate Program are sustained in light of its growth and the possible expansion of other undergraduate or graduate health programs.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>Fall 2025 (coinciding with the launch of the Milton program)</p>

Unit Update: This recommendation remains highly relevant and is perhaps even more pressing today, considering the significant growth in programs, faculty, and students that has occurred since the cyclical program review. The Department has concentrated on new faculty recruitment and onboarding, and although strategic planning has been discussed broadly, a formal process has not yet begun. With the introduction of the PhD in

Health Sciences program, which further underscores the need for clear long term direction, the Department is committed to completing this recommendation in advance of the next cyclical program review.

Dean of Science Comments: The Department is encouraged to adhere to its commitment to conduct a strategic planning exercise before its next Cyclical Review.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: While unit-level strategic plans should always be aligned with any Faculty level strategic planning documents, given the recent expansions of HE programming (e.g. MSc and PhD programs), enrolment and the addition of new faculty, the Department is encouraged to undertake a visioning or planning activity prior to or as part of the preparation for its next cyclical program review.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
8. If indeed a new graduate program goes ahead, the Program will need to be attentive to issues of faculty and administrative staff workload, and capacity for student supervision at the undergraduate level.	Department, Dean of Science	Dean, Faculty of Science	Fall 2023 (coinciding with the launch of the planned MSc program)

Unit Update: This recommendation is similar to #3 and our response is also similar. Issues of faculty and staff workload have been mitigated through the addition of new faculty and staff resources for the Department, along with increased advising capacity. For both the MSc and PhD program developments, a survey of all faculty was conducted to determine their capacity for supervising additional students and this information has been factored into enrolment targets for the graduate programs. Faculty members’ ability to supervise undergraduate students has not been negatively impacted by the addition of the graduate programs.

Dean of Science Comments: This recommendation has been addressed appropriately.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The committee agrees that this recommendation has been satisfied through the addition of new faculty and staff to support program expansion and enrolment growth. No further reporting is required.

Recommendation to be Implemented (from Final Assessment Report)	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date
9. Cultivate opportunities for collaboration and shared	Department Chair	Deans of Science and Human and Social Science	Ongoing

programming with the Brantford (and future Milton) campus.			
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Unit Update: Since the cyclical review took place, the plan for Milton campus programming has changed and no further programs are being developed for that campus at this time. With regard to the Brantford campus, and the Department of Health Studies in particular, there has been strengthened collaboration between the two units since the cyclical program review. The Department of Health Studies opened up several of its online elective courses to students in the Department of Health Sciences, which has resulted in significant additional enrolments in those courses each year. In addition, the development of the MSc program has created opportunities for faculty from Brantford to have adjunct status within the Department and supervise graduate students. Finally, Dr. Kate Rossiter has been seconded from Health Studies to serve as Chair in Health Sciences for a three-year term. The relationship is currently between the two units is very productive, and Health Sciences will continue to identify appropriate opportunities for further collaboration.

Dean of Science Comments: As noted, considerable efforts have been made to address this recommendation with respect to the Brantford Campus. They have gone as far as they can go for now given the formation and activity of Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Structure, which precludes any further action to address this recommendation at this juncture.

Program Review Sub-Committee Comments: The committee is happy to hear about the productive collaborations between the Department of Health Sciences and the Department of Health Studies and encourages the units to continue to identify opportunities where working together will benefit students and/or enhance their Laurier experience. No further reporting is required.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Unit: The most significant changes within the Department since the 2021-2022 cyclical program review all relate to growth: growth in the number of undergraduate students (from approximately ~550 to ~1000 students over the past several years), in the number of HE full-time faculty, and in the addition of graduate programming. This growth is exciting and a testament to the attractiveness and quality of Health Sciences programming at Laurier. Several of the issues noted by the external review committee of the BSc in Health Sciences program have been completed, resolved, or are no longer relevant at this time. The most important outstanding recommendation is to engage in a strategic planning process for the Department, and the anticipated addition of a PhD program will make this even more relevant. The Department commits to engaging in this process prior to its next cyclical program review. It will also continue to advocate for the faculty and staff resources necessary to balance enrolment growth and ensure continuation of high-quality programming and its reputation at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: There is no doubt that the Department has experienced significant growth in undergraduate registrations, which has led to growth of faculty complement and then the development and launch of their graduate programming. This activity has been embraced by the Department, which has been instrumental in their collective successes. They are commended for this, and they are encouraged to continue their high level of commitment and dedication to their students as they manage the increasing enrolments.

Program Review Sub-Committee: The committee appreciates the comments provided by the Department of Health Sciences and the Dean of the Faculty of Science summarizing changes and actions that have taken place since the 2021-2022 cyclical program review to support the recommendations made by the external review committee. The Implementation Report reveals many successes for the Department since the cyclical program review took place, including the addition of an MSc program, the in progress development of a PhD program, growth in undergraduate enrolments and an increase in the faculty and staff resources within the Department. As the Department expands its range of programs and its enrolments, it is encouraged to monitor the impacts of expansion on program quality and excellence to ensure that they are not compromised by this growth. The committee wishes the Department good luck with its current initiatives and is pleased to share that no further Implementation Reports will be necessary in advance of the next scheduled cyclical program review in 2028-2029.

Subsequent Report Required: No

Next Cyclical Program Review: 2028-2029