SFU OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST

8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC   TEL: 778.782.3925   vpacad@sfu.ca
Canada V5A 1S6   FAX: 778.782.5876   www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate	**DATE**	November 9, 2015
FROM	Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP	**PAGES**	1/1
RE:	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review of the Department of Gerontology (SCUP 15-36)		

At its October 21, 2015 meeting, SCUP reviewed and approved the Action Plan for the Department of Gerontology that resulted from its External Review.

The Educational Goals Assessment Plan was reviewed and is attached for the information of Senate.

Motion:

That Senate approve the Action Plan for the Department of Gerontology that resulted from its External Review.

c: Habib Chaudhury
     J. Craig

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY   ENGAGING THE WORLD

SFU OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC AND PROVOST

8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC   TEL: 778.782.4636   avpcio@sfu.ca
Canada V5A 1S6   FAX: 778.782.5876   www.sfu.ca/vpacademic

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Jon Driver, Chair, SCUP	**DATE**	October 16, 2015
FROM	Gord Myers, Associate Vice President, Academic	**PAGES**	1/1
RE:	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: External Review of the Department of Gerontology		

Attached are the External Review Report and the Action Plan for the Department of Gerontology. The Educational Goals Assessment Plan is included, for information only, with the Action Plan.

Excerpt from the External Review Report:
"...SFU Gerontology is a jewel of a department. Its small size belies its impact. The department's mission and activities are central to one of the most profound societal changes of the early 21st century. Population aging is both a global phenomenon and a local issue. SFU can be proud of this group of scholars who have taken the lead in the province in addressing key issues of health promotion and built environment for older people."

Following the site visit, the Report of the External Review Team* for the Department of Gerontology was submitted in May 2015. The Reviewers made a number of recommendations based on the Terms of Reference that were provided to them. Subsequently, a meeting was held with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Chair of the Department of Gerontology and the Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (VPA) to consider the recommendations. An Action Plan was prepared taking into consideration the discussion at the meeting and the External Review Report. The Action Plan has been endorsed by the Department and the Dean.

Motion:

> **That SCUP approve and recommend to Senate the Action Plan for the Department of Gerontology that resulted from its external review.**

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*External Review Team:
     Norah Keating, University of Alberta (Chair of Review Team)
     Margaret Denton, McMaster University
     Benyamin Schwarz, University of Missouri
     Scott Lear (Internal), Simon Fraser University

Attachments:
     1.   External Review Report (May 2015)
     2.   Department of Gerontology Action Plan
     3.   Department of Gerontology Educational Goals Assessment Plan

cc   John Craig, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
       Habib Chaudhury, Chair, Department of Gerontology

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY   ENGAGING THE WORLD

Department of Gerontology Simon Fraser University

Report of the External Review Committee

May 2015

This report draws on the Self-study report of the Department of Gerontology at SFU and the site visit of the external review committee in late March 2015. It reflects the consensus of the review committee. The report is written in response to the review committee's mandate to:

"assess the Unit and comment on its strengths and weaknesses, on opportunities for change and/or improvement, and on quality and effectiveness. The Review Committee should make essential, formal prioritized recommendations that address its major concerns, with reference to the resources available to the unit and the objectives described in its five-year plan".

The report comprises 6 sections:
1. Overview
2. Educational programs
3. Research and Faculty Productivity
4. Partnerships and Community Embeddedness
5. Department Structure and Administration
6. Recommendations

Department of Gerontology Review Committee

Norah Keating   University of Alberta (Committee Chair)
Margaret Denton   McMaster University
Benyamin Schwarz   University of Missouri

Scott Lear   Simon Fraser University (Internal committee member)

1. Overview of review committee's impressions of the Gerontology Department

We being this report with our conclusion—that SFU Gerontology is a jewel of a department. Its small size belies its impact. The department's mission and activities are central to one of the most profound societal changes of the early 21st century. Population aging is both a global phenomenon and a local issue. SFU can be proud of this group of scholars who have taken the lead in the province in addressing key issues of health promotion and built environment for older people.

The Department is a leader in capacity building in gerontology. They offer 4 educational programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels and have made a considerable impact on the knowledge base of professionals in the lower mainland. They are about to graduate their 100th masters student.

Research programs on built environment and on health in later life are strong and well-funded. The work of faculty members and students is at the cutting edge of research and knowledge transfer and is embedded across in local and national communities. Not surprisingly, the department is held in high regard by its many stakeholders.

Recommendation 1. The Department of Gerontology should be presented as an SFU example of the best in community engaged scholarship.

In the next sections of the report, we elaborate on these themes, highlighting issues and making recommendations for further strengthening the department.

2. Educational programs

The Department is unique in Canada in the extent of its educational offerings in Gerontology. There are 4 formal educational programs. At the undergraduate level are a Minor in Gerontology and a post baccalaureate Diploma Program. At the graduate level, a Masters and PhD in Gerontology are offered. Overall the programs are well-developed, heavily subscribed and well-respected in the community. The self-study report indicated that the vast majority of graduates find employment in their area of expertise. However, with only 4.5 faculty complement, the Department is very stretched in terms of teaching and supervisory capacity.

Undergraduate Programs. Approximately 400 students from across the campus take Gerontology undergraduate courses per year. Currently there are 44 students in the Diploma Program and 76 in the Gerontology Minor.

The Diploma program accepts students with undergraduate degrees who are interested in obtaining specialized training in Gerontology for purposes of employment in the field or to obtain entrance into the graduate program in Gerontology. To graduate from the program they must complete 32 units of courses. Students who have not had experience working in the field of aging may be required to take a practicum. Applied experience with older people is an essential element of these programs.

The Minor program in Gerontology trains undergraduates who are interested in Gerontology. It complements their major in another subject. The courses supporting this program are the same as for the Diploma Program requirement. In contrast to the diploma program, students in the Gerontology Minor are required to take 15 Units of Gerontology courses.

Both of these programs are heavily subscribed and appear to be meetings needs of working professionals for professional training in Gerontology and for those who wish to enhance their basic knowledge in aging in order to qualify for a graduate program. Enrolment in the Minor Program and the Diploma Program has grown over time. In fact, enrolment in the Minor Program has tripled in the past five years. Average undergraduate class sizes have risen over the past 5 years from 24 to 28. Given the university funding structure which is reliant on undergraduate enrolment, there are expectations that the department will increase enrolment in the Gerontology minor and diploma programs and to introduce more students to Gerontology service courses such as Gerontology 101 and Gerontology 301.

The Self-Study report revealed that the Gerontology Department is considering the feasibility of offering a major or joint major in Gerontology to increase the number of students in their undergraduate programs. The 19 courses currently in the calendar would provide an adequate base for a major program, however at this point most courses are full, with waiting lists. Extra demand on courses cannot be accommodated without program restructuring and without additional resources. Students interested in Gerontology are well served by current course and program offerings

Recommendation 2.1: Given heavy demand on teaching and other faculty resources, and the presence of two undergraduate programs, we do not believe that a major in Gerontology will provide significant added value. We do not recommend the development of a major in Gerontology.

The Department offers 1 lower division course and 16 upper division courses (eight courses per semester) of which Gerontology faculty members teach the majority. The remaining courses are taught by adjunct teaching professors who teach on a sessional basis. The Review Committee was impressed by the most highly skilled group of adjunct teaching professors we have seen—e.g. Canada's foremost scholar in health promotion; former assistant director of CIHR Institute of Aging; senior administrator of a Long Term Care home. Since most of the adjunct teaching professors have retired from their previous employment, it is unclear how long the Department can rely on their willingness or ability to teach many of the Gerontology courses.

Recommendation 2.2 That 2 continuing academic positions (CRC and position in mental health and aging) be filled as soon as possible (discussed in section 3). Subsequent to this stabilization of teaching resources, a succession plan for sessional instructors should be developed.

The department offers high demand courses. As a resource management strategy, the Department has been advised to cap some of its courses because of the limitations on the number of Teacher Assistants. The Introduction to Gerontology (Gero 300) is particularly in high demand and the course has a waiting list on a regular basis. Third and fourth year courses are capped at 25 and have waiting lists. This class limit is appropriate for the seminar format used in senior courses.

Most of the courses are offered at the Vancouver campus. This is where the administrative center and the faculty offices are concentrated. The downtown location is essential for many of the students as well as some of research activities. There is a pressure from the administration to increase the number of the students and improve the visibility of the program by teaching some of the courses on the two other campuses. Student numbers could increase, but program caps discourage growth. The department is willing to remove some caps on some courses and also teach some of the courses at the other campuses.

Approximately 13 undergraduate gerontology courses are offered each year by the Department. Some high demand courses are such as GERO 300 are offered multiple times. About half of the courses are offered in-class and the other half are online. In-class courses are offered at the Downtown campus, most often in the late afternoon or early evening, with a few being offered at the Surrey Campus. Since most of the Diploma students work full- or part time, online courses offerings fulfill a need and also make it convenient for distance students to complete a diploma. The Department is prepared to offer courses on the Burnaby campus with adequate teaching resources to support them. Removal of caps on course enrolment will require increased TA resources. In our conversations with graduate students, we noted their interest in more opportunities for such teaching experience.

Recommendation 2.3 Better communication between the Dean and the Department is necessary concerning the expectations of undergraduate student numbers and the associated resource implications of the number of tenure-track faculty members, faculty member workloads, and TA support.

The Review Committee was most impressed with the location of the Gerontology Student Internship and Practicum Placements. They range from provincial and municipal governments to health authorities, long-term care homes, seniors centres, community and health services and more. Feedback from students and community members suggests that internships provided a rich learning experience for students who wish to gain experience working in the field of aging.

If the goal is to increase service teaching by offering courses at all three location and on-line this would be impossible without additional teaching resources. The loss of one position in the psychology of aging and the administrative and research commitments of the full-time faculty suggests that no capacity exists currently to introduce additional courses without additional resources.

Graduate programs

The MA Program in Gerontology began graduating students in 1998 and averages six per year. The Review Committee was impressed by the publication record of the MA graduates. Between 2007-2014, 61 peer-reviewed articles have been published or are in press. To date 96 students have graduated and the 100th graduate is expected this year. The PhD program was established in 2007 and currently there are 4 PhD students in the program. Masters and PhD students that we met during the review were pleased with the quality of their programs. Their program suggestions are listed in next sections of the report.

Nineteen graduate courses are listed in the calendar. This impressive set of courses represents the strongest Gerontology course offerings in the country. The self-study report revealed that   MA graduates (over 90%) are employed in positions related to their field of study (e.g., Senior Policy Advisor, Assistant Professor, Chronic Disease Services Leader etc.) or are in PhD programs. Clearly there is a demand for Gerontology graduates trained at the graduate level.

There are two areas of concentration in the Master's program: Environment and Aging, and Health and Aging. The four program components include a core methods course; electives; thesis or project; and internship for students who do not have working experience in the field. Students complete seven courses (one core, and six electives chosen from the two concentrations) and complete a thesis or a capstone project. The Department reports that the average completion time is 2.75 years. It would be desirable for Gerontology to continue to bring down the completion time to two years. The Department does not offer courses during the summer months. This is often the time in which students complete their internship requirements. Students said that they would be pleased if the internship could be a credit course. This would give formal acknowledgement to the work that they have done and could be used to maintain the number of credits received for the degree but reduce the number of courses students are required to take in line with other MA programs in Canada.

Recommendation 2.4. The department should consider reducing requirements for its Master's program and giving course credit for capstone, internship and practicum projects.

In the self-study, the Department raises the possibility of developing a professional-MA in Gerontology that would support training associated with the NCE and CLSA. The Review Committee does not think there would be a market for this program given the higher fees associated with it. Further the Faculty are currently stretched to the limit and without additional resources could not mount a professional MA.

Recommendation 2.5. The Department should not develop a professional masters programs at this time.

PhD Program

The PhD program was established in 2007 and currently there are 4 PhD students in the program. Doctoral students complete five GERO graduate courses. They may be required to complete up to seven additional courses if deemed necessary by the admissions committee. Two courses relate to one of two streams that the student has selected as an area of expertise: environment and aging; or health and aging. There are required courses in methods/statistics and theory. In addition they must complete two comprehensive examinations, and successfully defend their dissertation proposal before being officially admitted to candidacy for the PhD degree.

The program appears rigorous and of high quality. It would thrive with the addition of a few more students, contingent on additional resources that would be afforded by the hiring into the vacant mental health and aging position and the approval of a CRC Tier 1 chair. Graduate students are an essential element of a vibrant research program, both as trainees and as contributing members of research teams. The development of the PhD program was consistent with the strong research presence in the Department. Given the limited resources within the department, the PhD program to date has been small. In fact, the graduate chair of the department reported that she has advised not to recruit more PhDs since the university wants energy to be focused on undergraduate students. University funding models are powerful drivers of academic priorities. However, we urge members of SFU senior administration to work closely with the Department to ensure that they have the graduate student resources necessary to support their substantial research programs.

Recommendation 2.6. That the growth of the PhD program becomes a Department goal to be pursued once additional faculty members are in place. The Dean of Graduate Studies is encouraged to work with the department to ensure that there are sufficient other resources to effect a modest expansion of the PhD program.

Student Funding
No minimum funding is guaranteed to incoming graduate students; however, most graduate students receive funding through university allocated awards and bursaries and from private endowments. There are 15 internal awards available to gerontology students. The department allocates more than $50,000 in internal graduate awards each year. A qualified student is normally eligible for only one graduate fellowship per year of $6250. All students who request funding receive RA or TAs assignments. Not all students ask for funding, in part because some are employed community professionals. With the new AGE-WELL and Longitudinal Studies on Aging research projects and other multi-year projects such as SSHRC grants there will be more opportunities for students to secure research assistantships.

Graduate students have done very well in securing external awards. For example all Phd students have substantial finding: 3 have SSHRC doctoral fellowships and a fourth has a Technology Evaluation in the Elderly fellowship. Between 2007 and 2014, graduate students received over $672,500 in external funding.

Recommendation 2.7. The excellent Department website is a good source of recruitment of graduate students. There are a number of graduate awards described on the website. These could be augmented with information about specific, project related assistantships working with specific faculty members. Such targeted information could be a good approach to attracting strong graduate students.

Educational Goals

In response to the SFU initiative to strengthen curriculum planning and enhance quality education, each academic unit is to begin a seven year process of defining educational goals, collecting data, analyzing data and taking action. In 2014-15 the Gerontology Department began this process by developing a set of educational goals for their four programs. Two overarching goals have been identified along with goals specific to each program. Future work may involve developing educational goals at the course level.

The reviewers were impressed with the development of the educational goals, components and assessment sources for the four Gerontology programs. The goals address both the knowledge of core Gerontology content and the skills students are expected to develop in a humanities and social science education. The goals are relevant, meaningful, assessable, and align clearly with the curriculum.

For each goal, specific performance or outcomes issue have been identified along with assessment data sources. The two overarching goals specifically address content goals including the ability to understand, critically analyze, synthesize and integrate gerontological knowledge. The components and assessment data sources are identified. Program level goals are more skills based (writing, speaking, knowledgably about Gerontology theories, impacts of aging, relevant topics and understanding implications and challenges of an aging population). Each program level builds the skill level and competency required by graduates of the program. For example from demonstrating a basic mastery of academic writing at the Gerontology Minor and Diploma levels to being able conduct independent research using appropriate theory and methods at the Masters level , to being able to independently conceive, design and conduct a theoretically grounded research project at the PhD level.

Recommendation 2.8. Educational goals developed by the Department should be used for periodic assessment of how the programs contribute to student learning. There is some risk of assessment of these goals becoming onerous and the Department and senior administration should be vigilant in their quest to maintain high quality education without overburdening those who deliver it.

3.   Research and Faculty Productivity

The Department has its roots in research. The Gerontology Research Centre (GRC) was established in 1982, more than a decade before the establishment of the Department of Gerontology. In classic academic fashion, the teaching programs of the department emerged from its research base. Departmental research programs are extensive, well-funded and with strong partnerships and well-integrated approaches to knowledge-mobilization strategies.

Research of department members has a social behavioural orientation. Through their work, researchers have developed a unique focus in Canadian gerontology on built environment and health promotion with a bridging area of aging and technology. Faculty members excel in competitive grants received, in publications and in knowledge dissemination. As noted in the self-report, since the last departmental review in 2007, faculty members have produced a total of 12 books, 108 peer-reviewed articles, and 41 chapters in books (compared to 13, 97 and 23 respectively from 2000-2007). The average amount of funding received per faculty member per year for 2007-2014 was $306,607 (a substantial increase from $115,483 per year over 2000-2006). Funding from major granting agencies including SSHRC and CIHR and National Centres of Excellence as provincial organizations such as the Michael Smith Foundation, Vancouver Foundation and United Way illustrate the quality of critical thinking, methodological skills and relevance to local as well as national issues of their work. Departmental scholars are working at the cutting edge of empirical and community-based research and knowledge dissemination in their areas of expertise.

More than 30 years ago, the creation of the Gerontology Research Centre (GRC) provided the foundation for what today is a strong research presence of the Department of Gerontology. The exceptional body of work described in detail in the self-report was produced by 4.5 full-time equivalent continuing faculty members and 1 full-time limited-term faculty (Drs. Chaudhury, Sixsmith, Wister, Mahmood, Mitchell (.5) and Koehn). Their high level of productivity is particularly impressive given that they also are responsible for department teaching programs, outreach and administration. The term 'under-resourced over-achievers' comes to mind.

The development of the Canadian Longitudinal Research on Aging, SFU hub and data centre is a major coup for the department. The CLSA is hugely important in Canada as it will be the major source of data on population aging in the coming decades. Dr. Wister is CLSA Co-Principal Investigator and director of the SFU Data Collection Site (DCS), and the recently built CATI site. The CLSA will provide a significant amount of funding over the next 20 years. Funding details are in the self-study report but highlights include:

- over 25 staff funded by CLSA CIHR funds coming directly to SFU Gerontology
- CFI funding to Gerontology to build the two data collection labs was $1,550,177.
- Phase III of the CLSA which includes initial tracking and comprehensive cohorts has received $1,875,000 for the SFU data collection site.
- Phase IV Follow-up CIHR funding was recently approved for $43.5M for 2015-2020-a portion of which will come to SFU.

- in addition to the funds for the DCS data collection at the Surrey site, another $500K will come to SFU every 3 years for the full 20-year study to collect telephone data.

Age-Well is a 5 year National Centre of Excellence on technology and aging. Andrew Sixsmith is a co-principal investigator and coordinates knowledge mobilization, commercialization of outputs, team-building within the network and training of highly qualified personnel. The NCE was awarded just as the self-study report was being completed and hence is not featured in the report. However, infrastructure support has been provided for the development of the SFU Age-Well Surrey lab. In its visit to the new facilities, the committee was impressed with the connections to local organizations that will be involved in the development of technologies to support health of older persons. The program has excellent potential to support postdocs and research associates, some of which are already in place. We understand that co-PIs are not eligible for research funding from the NCE. However, infrastructure already developed and partnerships will provide an excellent platform for such funding.

Other important research programs in the department illustrate the extent of its research capacity. Habib Chaudhury leads a program of research on built environment and aging. He is co-investigator on a SSHRC partnership grant on community participation in Canadians with physical disabilities; and on a CIHR operating grant on determinants of food intake in long term care. Atiya Mahmood recently completed a prestigious Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation Fellowship for Experienced Researchers in which she developed a built environmental audit tool to assess neighbourhoods for the for physical activity in older adults. Barbara Mitchell continues her research on lifecourse transitions with a SSHRC insight grant. Sharon Koehn is engaged in a number of projects exploring experiences of aging with ethnically diverse older adults. Together the scholars in gerontology are making an impact, creating and applying knowledge about population aging in the lives of older adults.

Faculty resources are among the most pressing of needs for this department if it is to continue to build its already impressive research presence along with its substantial teaching and community service commitments. As one faculty member in the department said, "we want to do what we do very well. We just need a few more resources to do that". The review committee noted the supportiveness of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. He highlighted the importance of population aging in Canada and how the department has been run well and 'punches above its weight'.

Administrative loads are heavy given that there are few faculty members to share required major responsibilities of Department Chair, Graduate Chair and GRC Director. Reduced teaching loads for faculty members holding these positions as well as for those running major labs (Wister and Sixsmith) help somewhat to reduce the pressure. However, it also means that teaching capacity is necessarily limited. Only one continuing faculty member (Mahmood) carries a full teaching load of 4 courses. The unfilled position in aging and mental health further constrains teaching capacity. The department has engaged a highly skilled group of sessional instructors with impeccable credentials and years of teaching experience to fill some of these gaps. Yet regardless of their skill, sessionals cannot assist with supervision of graduate students. Moving teaching, administration and supervision responsibilities around does not create more capacity.

From all groups that we interviewed during the review, we heard two consistent messages:

- that there is urgent need to replace the faculty position in mental health and aging which has been vacant since 2012. The high and increasing demand for undergraduate teaching, growth in the MA program, addition of the PhD Program, and expansion of the curriculum by several courses, mean that the need for a 1.0 FTE continuing faculty member is critical. The committee understands that the faculty member who left the Department is still in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and thus there is no 'vacant position' in the faculty at large. However, we do not believe that the Department of Gerontology should have to bear the burden of the lost capacity within the department.

Recommendation 3.1. That the faculty position in mental health and aging be filled within the upcoming academic year.

- that a CRC Tier 1 Chair would enhance and help sustain the impressive research momentum in the Department. Specifically, a CRC Tier 1 chair would support the CLSA and build capacity to use 'big data', provide further expertise in survey research methodology and longitudinal data analysis. We understand that there is a Tier 1 Chair coming available in 2016. The Department has made a formal request to the Dean of Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for a Tier I Canada Research Chair (CRC) Chair in Interdisciplinary Longitudinal Aging to be placed in the Department of Gerontology and strategically linked to the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) national research platform.

Recommendation 3.2 That the CRC Tier 1 chair be designated to the Department of Gerontology for a position in Longitudinal Aging.

Gerontology Research Centre. The Gerontology Research Centre was developed at a time when there was no Department of Gerontology. Today the Department has a strong research presence. The GRC endowment fund allows for extra department capacity through its funding of 1-2 post-doctoral fellows, the position of the information officer and invited lectures. In the previous review of the Department of Gerontology, the committee suggested that the priorities of the Department and the GRC be more closely aligned. Good progress has been made in this regard. However, we believe that further work can be undertaken toward integrating the two entities. Given the large and demanding research program of the GRC Director, we see the likelihood of a drift toward the GRC reflecting primarily the research direction of its Director. Further, while the Department chair can ask for example that funded postdocs be hired into areas of Department priority, there is not requirement to do so on the part of the GRC director. One way of ensuring that the GRC reflects Department priorities would be for the Dean to delegate his authority over the GRC to the Gerontology Department Chair. Such a move would afford the Chair more ability to manage departmental resources such as teaching and administrative assignments as well as ensuring that the GRC reflects the interests of its constituents whose core members are Gerontology Department academics. Aligning GRC priorities with those of the Department is particularly important given the small size of the department.

Recommendation 3.3. That the Dean designate to the Department authority over the GRC.

Limited term position. The limited term position is important to the department in terms of the research that Dr. Koehn conducts, her extensive community connections and engagement in service learning. It currently is funded through a combination of Providence Health Care and Department/GRC endowment funds. Funding is precarious as Providence may be taken over by Vancouver Coastal and

current arrangements may not go forward into the new administration. In our discussion with Dr. Myers, he talked about strategic funds that can be transferred from the Provost's office to the Department. He also mentioned that the Office of Advancement could assist in finding money to support such a position.

Recommendation 3.4.*That senior administration work closely with the Department to create stability in the funding of the limited term position.*

4. Partnerships and Community Embeddedness

The Department of Gerontology is held in high regard by students, postdocs and research associates, community partners and collaborators at SFU and elsewhere. It is embedded in the SFU and greater Vancouver communities and has associate members from across Canada and internationally. Its community partnerships are multifaceted, based on research relationships, student internships and practicums and funding of research positions including the BC Real Estate postdoc, and Providence Health research associate. Long before partnerships were the trend, this group developed them. They know that partnerships are built over time and need to be sustained. Their community connections continue through their educational programs which provide knowledge and skills for community professionals. The department has an extensive practicum and internship program that is a fundamental part of the community connections for which is it known.

Ties to members of the SFU community also are strong. The Department has formal collaborations with many departments on campus including Health Sciences, Geography, Physiology & Kinesiology, Sociology/Anthropology, IRMACS, Computing Science. Students from many departments on campus take gerontology courses. Thus questions raised by some members of senior administration about whether the department has connected with other departments on campus are somewhat puzzling given that the department has formal relationships with many departments on campus, has collaborative research projects with SFU faculty as well as those at UBC and elsewhere in Canada and internationally.

National and international linkages are developed through research programs of department members and through hosting of conferences. For example, the Department recently hosted a major international event directly related to departmental areas of expertise: The International Society for Gerontechnology 7th World Conference (ISG2010). In 2012 the Department hosted the premier gerontology conference in Canada, the 41st Annual Scientific and Educational Meeting (ASEM) of the Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG). Department members have national leadership roles that reflect their stature. A notable example is Dr. Wister's role as chair of the National Senior's Council, an organization that is advisory to the Federal Minister of State (Seniors).

The Gerontology Research Centre serves as a clearinghouse for information and provides consultation and technical assistance to the academic community, government, public and private organizations.
The GRC continues to have an key role in fostering knowledge creation and translation. It is one of the important vehicles for maintaining the community engaged research that is a hallmark of SFU.

A department goal is continue to build these relationships by formalizing agreements with key community organizations/institutions to further support internship placements for MA students. Developing and maintaining these relationships takes skill and ongoing tending. To that end, we make the following recommendation.

Recommendation 4.1. that the .5FTE practicum/internship position that was approved in 1995 finally receive funding.

5 Department Structure and Administration

A small department has both structural advantages and disadvantages. It is advantaged in that all members of the department can be involved in administrative decisions, providing potential for excellent integration and transparency. The Department is very inclusive in its administrative style. For example, sessional staff who are invited to all department meetings.

In the self-report, is a statement about the advantage of a small inclusive approach to management:

"The Department developed, approved, and continues to revise a Constitution to guide the functioning of the Department... One of the advantages of a small department is that virtually all of our CFL and limited-term faculty sit on most committees, which contributes to sustaining strong faculty communication channels, mutual support in a highly collegial environment, and the formation of a distinct departmental culture".

The Department is disadvantaged for the same reasons. There are only a few people to take on administrative roles. Structurally, the Department has a Chair, heads of both graduate and undergraduate committees and Director of the GRC. This means that almost all department members have major administrative responsibilities. Due to the organizational structure of the GRC and the Department the GRC Director reports directly to the Dean of FASS and operates somewhat independently from the Gerontology Department. This administrative structure can create tensions around resource allocation.

There is some assistance to support administrative roles. In total there are 1.6 FTE administrative staff: a 1.0 Manager of Academic and Administrative Services and a .6 FTE Graduate Secretary. The GRC has 1 FTE Information Officer and a ½ FTE receptionist who supports the Director, GRC staff, and faculty. The information officer has responsibility for knowledge dissemination. In addition to website maintenance and library support, he supports the development of the 6th edition of the Fact Book on Aging in BC.

Library assistance from the Gerontology Liaison Librarian, Belzberg Library is a considerable asset to the department. The librarian provides onsite support to Gero students including going into classes and teaches students how to do lit searches and says that chat references have skyrocketed. In our meeting with her, she said that she would like to be able to supply more support to distance students and is looking for opportunities to get to know these students. Administrative support is never enough and the Department would benefit from an additional .4 FTE graduate secretary to bring the position to full time.

Recommendation 5.1. that enhanced staffing be provided to the Department based on recommendations throughout this report.

7. Recommendations

1. Overall assessment of the department

Recommendation 1.1. The Department of Gerontology should be presented as an SFU example of the best in community engaged scholarship.

2. Educational programs

Recommendation 2.1: Given heavy demand on teaching and other faculty resources, and the presence of two undergraduate programs, we do not believe that a major in Gerontology will provide significant added value. We do not recommend the development of a major in Gerontology.

Recommendation 2.2 That 2 continuing academic positions (CRC and position in mental health and aging) be filled as soon as possible (discussed in section 3). Subsequent to this stabilization of teaching resources, a succession plan for sessional instructors should be developed.

Recommendation 2.3 Better communication between the Dean and the Department is necessary concerning the expectations of undergraduate student numbers and the associated resource implications of the number of tenure-track faculty members, faculty member workloads, and TA support.

Recommendation 2.4. The department should consider reducing requirements for its Master's program and giving course credit for capstone, internship and practicum projects.

Recommendation 2.5. The Department should not develop a professional masters programs at this time.

Recommendation 2.6. That the growth of the PhD program become a Department goal to be pursued once additional faculty members are in place. The Dean of Graduate Studies is encouraged to work with the department to ensure that there are sufficient other resources to effect a modest expansion of the PhD program.

Recommendation 2.7. The excellent Department website is a good source of recruitment of graduate students. There are a number of graduate awards described on the website. These could be augmented with information about specific, project related assistantships working with specific faculty members. Such targeted information could be a good approach to attracting strong graduate students.

Recommendation 2.8. Educational goals developed by the Department should be used for periodic assessment of how the programs contribute to student learning. There is some risk of assessment of these goals becoming onerous and the Department and senior administration should be vigilant in their quest to maintain high quality education without overburdening those who deliver it.

3. Research and Faculty Productivity

Recommendation 3.1. That the faculty position in mental health and aging be filled within the upcoming academic year.

Recommendation 3.2 That the CRC Tier 1 chair be designated to the Department of Gerontology for a position in Longitudinal Aging.

Recommendation 3.3. That the Dean designate to the Department authority over the GRC.

Recommendation 3.4.That senior administration work closely with the Department to create stability in the funding of the limited term position.

4. Partnerships and Community Embeddedness
Recommendation 4.1 that the .5FTE practicum/internship position that was approved in 1995 finally receive funding.

5. Department Structure and Administration
Recommendation 5.1. that enhanced staffing be provided to the Department based on recommendations throughout this report.

EXTERNAL REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Section 1 – To be completed by the Responsible Unit Person e.g. Chair or Director

Unit under review	Date of Review Site visit	Responsible Unit person	Faculty Dean
Gerontology	March 25-27, 2015	Habib Chaudhury	John Craig
....	....	....	....

Notes
1. It is **not** expected that every recommendation made by the Review Team be covered by this Action Plan. The major thrusts of the Report should be identified and some consolidation of the recommendations may be possible while other recommendations of lesser importance may be excluded.
2. Attach the required plan to assess the success of the **Educational Goals** as an addendum (Senate 2013).
3. Should any additional response be warranted, it should be attached as a separate document.

1. PROGRAMMING

1.1 Action/s (description what is going to be done):

1.1.1 Undergraduate:

- **Recommendation 2.2** That 2 continuing academic positions (CRC and position in mental health and aging) be filled as soon as possible (discussed in section 3). Subsequent to this stabilization of teaching resources, a succession plan for sessional instructors should be developed.

    Action: The Department has made formal requests and have engaged in several discussions with FASS Dean John Craig to secure a CRC in longitudinal health and aging research and a CFL position in mental health and aging. It is critically important that the two positions be filled by 2016 to not only implement a more permanent instructional faculty, but also to have a stronger links among pedagogy in undergraduate classrooms, graduate programs and faculty research. Our succession plan for sessional instructors will entail three strategies: 1) increased use of ABD doctoral students from our program; and 2) attracting new sessionals from our academic and community networks; and 3) integrating sessional teaching with the teaching loads of the 2 new CFL positions.

- **Recommendation 2.3** Better communication between the Dean and the Department is necessary concerning the expectations of undergraduate student numbers and the associated resource implications of the number of tenure-track faculty members, faculty

member workloads, and TA support.

Action: Currently, robust communication is maintained between the Dean's office and the Department. Department Chair attends the monthly DAC meetings and schedules meetings with the Dean as and when needed specific departmental issues arise. Also, Dept. Manager communicates with the Dean's office regularly in terms of TA/TI budget, etc. Moving forward, we intend to discuss possible ways of further improvement in communication (e.g., scheduled periodic meetings between the Dean and the Chair). It is worth noting that FASS Associate Dean Jane Pulkingham, Dept. Chair Habib Chaudhury and Dept. Manager Anne Marie Barrett have recently met to discuss plans of increasing enrollment caps in Gerontology undergraduate courses, and the need for increased TA/TI support.

1.1.2   Graduate:

Recommendation 2.4. The department should consider reducing requirements for its Master's program and giving course credit for capstone, internship and practicum projects.

Action: The Gerontology Department has made a number of recent changes to its MA curriculum, and after further review is proposing the following: A) The thesis option in the MA program has a reduced course load expectation (5 term courses), and the course load for the more circumscribed work of the popular capstone option (7 term courses) developed two years ago has been made commensurate with graduate expectations. Average completion times are trending toward shorter time frames based on these alterations to our programs. B) We are currently in the process of designating course credit to the internship component of the MA program. C) The capstone and thesis already have credits associated with them. Our rationale for the course load is as follows: Given that gerontology is a multi-disciplinary field, it is important that the graduate students take multiple gerontology courses in order to develop a comprehensive knowledge base of the theories and substantive issues. Currently, our MA program offers two concentration areas (Health and Aging; Built Environment and Aging) which are complementary to each other; therefore, we believe it is professionally advantageous for our MA students to gain knowledge in the secondary area.

Recommendation 2.6. That the growth of the PhD program becomes a Department goal to be pursued once additional faculty members are in place. The Dean of Graduate Studies is encouraged to work with the department to ensure that there are sufficient other resources to effect a modest expansion of the PhD program.

Action: Secure additional continuing faculty members to support modest growth of the PhD program. Also, secure additional Graduate Fellowships as well as additional endowed scholarships to attract new PhD students to the program.

Recommendation 2.7. The excellent Department website is a good source of recruitment of graduate students. There are a number of graduate awards described on the website. These could be augmented with information about specific, project related assistantships working with specific faculty members. Such targeted information could be a good approach to attracting strong graduate students.

Action: Teaching and Research Assistantship positions, when available, are posted on the appropriate SFU websites. We are currently in the process of revamping the department website with a variety of additional useful information, such as research opportunities linked to many of our large national projects (e.g., CLSA, AGE-Well); descriptions of current graduate students' research interests and backgrounds; and highlights of alumni jobs and projects. The website will also go through an overall makeover for improved accessibility and aesthetic appeal from the student perspective.

Recommendation 2.8. Educational goals developed by the Department should be used for periodic assessment of how the programs contribute to student learning. There is some risk of assessment of these goals becoming onerous and the Department and senior administration should be vigilant in their quest to maintain high quality education without overburdening those who deliver it.

Action: In the coming months the Department will engage in identifying a process for assessment of the educational goals at the various program levels. The Department will work with FASS educational consultant and senior administration for support as necessary.

1.2 Resource implications (if any):

Approval of and associated resource allocation from SFU senior administration for a CRC Tier 1 position and a regular full-time faculty position.

1.3 Expected completion date/s:

Advertisement for the CRC position in Fall 2015 for a start date on Summer-Fall 2016.

Approval of the fulltime faculty position by Fall 2015.

Department website revamp project – Spring 2016

Development of a plan to assess program level educational goals – Fall 2016

2. RESEARCH

2.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

Recommendation 3.1. That the faculty position in mental health and aging be filled within the upcoming academic year.

Action: Senior administration to approve a continuing faculty position to support current Departmental needs in undergraduate teaching, graduate supervision and various service responsibilities.

Recommendation 3.2 That the CRC Tier 1 chair be designated to the Department of Gerontology for a position in Longitudinal Aging.

Action: Senior administration to make final approval of a CRC Tier 1 chair position to engage in the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) Project, as well as take on teaching and graduate supervision load.

Recommendation 3.3. That the Dean designate to the Department authority over the GRC.

Action: The Department Chair will initiate a discussion with the GRC Director and GRC Steering Committee to consider options for more effective and optimal reporting process for the GRC Director.

Recommendation 3.4.That senior administration work closely with the Department to create stability in the funding of the limited term position.

Action: Faculty Dean and Department Chair to explore and identify support for this limited term position.

2.2 Resource implications (if any):

Approval and associated resource allocation from SFU senior administration for a CRC Tier 1 position and a regular full-time faculty position.

2.3 Expected completion date/s:

Advertisement for the CRC position in Fall 2015 for a start date on Summer-Fall 2016.
Approval of the fulltime faculty position -- Fall 2015.

Discussion regarding Dean designation to the Department authority over the GRC -- Fall 2015

Identification and allocation of strategic funding for the limited term position -- Fall 2015

3. ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

Recommendation 4.1. that the .5FTE practicum/internship position that was approved in 1995 finally receive funding.

Action: Senior administration to approve a half-time position to support the departmental goal to build community relationships and formalizing agreements with key community organizations/institutions to further support internship placements for MA students. The Dept. is taking proactive steps and is submitting a proposal to the SFU Community Engagement Initiative to expand and enhance our connections with diverse organizations that can provide our students with practicum and internship opportunities. Approval of a 0.5 FTE position would help put in place a sustainable mechanism for maintaining optimal communications with these organizations. We further anticipate that this position will also serve as a recruitment mechanism to the graduate program.

3.2 Resource implications (if any):

Salary support for the .5FTE administrative position

3.3 Expected completion date/s:

Spring 2016

4. WORKING ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Action/s (what is going to be done):

- ....
- ....
- ....

4.2 Resource implications (if any):

4.3 Expected completion date/s:

5. .... (OTHER)

5.1 Action/s:

- ....
- ....
- ....

5.2 Resource implications (if any):

5.3 Expected completion date/s:

The above action plan has been considered by the Unit under review and has been discussed and agreed to by the Dean.

Unit Leader (signed)	Date
[signature]	July 25, 2015
Name	Title: Chair and Professor

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Section 2 - Dean's comments and endorsement of the Action Plan:

I met with Dr. Habib Chaudhury, Chair of the Department of Gerontology on 12 August 2015 to discuss the external review prepared by Professors Norah Keating (University of Alberta) Margaret Denton (McMaster University) and Benyamin Schwarz (University of Missouri).

Our office has given close consideration to the external review and to the detailed response from the Department of Gerontology. The external reviewers have produced a thoughtful assessment, capturing many of the strengths found in the Department and identifying some of the challenges it faces. The response from the Department is equally thoughtful and to be welcomed.

The Dean's office is fully supportive of the appointment of a Tier 1 CRC in Gerontology and will work with the Department and with the Vice-President Research to realize this goal by September 2016.

We acknowledge the request for a continuing faculty position in mental health and aging but are not able to commit to this position at this time.

We agree that the relationship between the steering committee of the Gerontology Research Centre and the Department should be strengthened through discussion and are ready to assist in this process.

Faculty Dean	Date
	8 October 2015

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Table 1: *Gerontology Programs'* **Overarching Educational Goals, Components and Assessment Sources**

Program EGs: At the end of these programs students will...	Components	Assessment Data Sources
... be able to understand and critically analyze the literature, concepts, and theories in the field of gerontology	-Students can identify and describe contemporary issues in the field of gerontology -Students can critically evaluate assumptions, claims, evidence and arguments -Students can critically appraise and integrate information which supports or does not support a position -Students can examine research studies and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research -Students are aware of the potential limitations of research findings and methods	-Essays, literature reviews, and other written assignments -Online/in-class discussions -Presentations -Case studies -Quizes/Exams
... be able to synthesize and integrate interdisciplinary knowledge in order to understand and address contemporary issues in gerontology	-Students understand the complex and interdisciplinary nature of issues in the field of gerontology -Students recognize the multiple levels of diversity within older adult populations -Students can reflect on and challenge their own assumptions, beliefs and values about the process and experience of aging and about older adults -Students are able to critically analyze challenges faced by older adult population and identify potential solutions -Students understand and be able to implement and practice evidence-based decision-making	-Essays -Online/in-class discussions -Presentations -Experiential projects -Capstone Project/Master's Thesis/Dissertation -Quizes/Exams

Table 2: *Gerontology Minor Program*: Educational Goals, Components and Assessment Sources

Program EGs: At the end of this program students will...	Components	Assessment Data Sources
...demonstrate a basic mastery of academic writing in gerontology	-Students can properly format and organize an academic paper -Students can synthesize information from different sources -Students can formulate an argument and critically appraise evidence which supports or does not support their argument -Students know how to properly cite and reference information gathered from multiple sources	-Essays and writing assignments
...be able to speak knowledgeably about and discuss the important theories and topics relevant to the field of gerontology	-Students understand the importance and purpose of theories -Students are able to describe the major gerontological theories and discuss their critiques -Students understand the biological, psychological and social impacts of aging -Students have a basic understanding of topics relevant to the field of gerontology (e.g., health, health behaviours, housing, neighbourhood environment, demographic trends, social policy)	-Exams -Online/in-class discussions -Essays -Presentations
...understand the implications and challenges of population aging in Canada	-Students know the current demographic trends in Canada related to population aging -Students understand the social policy implications of aging in Canada -Students can critique assumptions and myths about population aging -Students can discuss the current issues and debates in the field of gerontology -Students can describe potential policy solutions for the challenges presented by population aging	-Exams -Online/in-class discussions -Essays -Presentations -Field/Experiential projects

Table 3: *Gerontology Diploma Program:* **Educational Goals, Components and Assessment Sources**

Program EGs: At the end of this program students will...	Components	Assessment Data Sources
...demonstrate a basic mastery of academic writing in gerontology	-Students can properly format and organize an academic paper -Students can synthesize information from different sources -Students can formulate an argument and critically appraise evidence which supports or does not support their argument -Students know how to properly cite and reference information	-Essays and writing assignments in courses
...have a basic understanding of theory, research methods, and program evaluation	-Students understand the importance and purpose of theories -Students are able to describe the major gerontological theories and discuss their critiques -Students demonstrate a basic understanding of the research process and methods -Students demonstrate a basic understanding of how to conduct program evaluations	-Exams and essays -Online/in-class discussions -Presentations -Field/Experiential projects -Case Studies
...have gained the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to prepare them for a career in gerontology	-Students gain experience in a work setting through their student practicum -Students have enhanced their knowledge of gerontological trends, topics and issues -Students understand the implications and challenges of population aging in Canada -Students can apply their knowledge of gerontological concepts, research and theories to address the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging population	-Student practicum assessments -Surveys of alumni

Table 4: *Gerontology Master's Program:* **Educational Goals, Components and Assessment Sources**

Program EGs: At the end of this program students will...	Components	Assessment Data Sources
...understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and be able to plan and conduct independent research using appropriate theory and methods	-Students understand the importance of theory and the major gerontological theories -Students are able to describe the relevance of major gerontological theories for contemporary issues for older adults -Students can utilize quantitative and qualitative research methods -Students have appropriate skills to utilize relevant data analysis and management applications -Students understand the research process, principles and ethics of good research -Students understand the importance of knowledge translation and the dissemination of research findings	-Exams and essays in research methods and theory courses -Capstone Project or Master's Thesis -Publications and knowledge translation activities -Field/Experiential projects -Case Studies
...have developed an area of specialization in the environment and aging or health and aging concentration	-Students build knowledge in a substantive concentration area, i.e., environment and aging or health and aging -Students specialize within their concentration and develop an area of expertise through their thesis or capstone project -Students gain applied experience in the field of gerontology through an internship	Exams and essays in substantive courses -Presentations -Capstone Project or Master's Thesis -Student internship
...have gained the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to prepare them for a career in the field of gerontology	-Students gain experience in a work setting through their student internship -Students are given opportunities for applied learning in their courses -Students are given opportunities for research, teaching and/or volunteer experience -Students can apply their knowledge of gerontological concepts, research and theories to address the challenges/opportunities of an aging population	-Student internship assessments -Surveys of alumni -Capstone Project or Master's Thesis

Table 5: *Gerontology PhD Program:* Educational Goals, Components and Assessment Sources

Program EGs: At the end of this program students will...	Components	Assessment Data Sources
...have gained training in advanced research methods in gerontology and be able to independently conceive, design and conduct a theoretically grounded research project	-Students are able to critically evaluate and apply theory in gerontology -Students can utilize advanced quantitative and qualitative research methods -Students develop an in-depth and critical understanding of the research methods, designs, and theories relevant to their dissertation research -Students demonstrate the ability to plan and conduct a major research project	-Comprehensive exams -Dissertation research -Exams and essays in relevant methods and theory courses -Field/Experiential projects -Case Studies
...be prepared to be leaders in their respective substantive domains and contribute to the knowledge base, policy, and practice of the field of gerontology	-Students are given opportunities for research, teaching and/or volunteer experience -Students are given opportunities for applied learning within their courses -Students can apply their knowledge of gerontological concepts, research and theories to address the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging population -Students can effectively communicate and disseminate their knowledge of the discipline -Students have developed an area of expertise within the field of gerontology	- Dissertation research -Publications and knowledge translation activities -Surveys of alumni