Comprehensive Program Review

FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

Certificate in Fire Prevention Officer, FPOF1

School of Public Safety, Fire & Safety Division

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1. Self-Study Report Summary

Conclusions

Student, graduate, and stakeholder feedback strongly indicates that the Fire Prevention, FPOF1, fulfills its intended purpose as an important professional development qualification in the field. However, there is room to improve on the elements of grading, support for online learning, and quality of curriculum materials. A significant challenge is addressing student persistence and moving students toward program completion. The emergence of micro-credentials that stack into larger credentials and ladder into higher credentials presents an opportunity to explore dividing the program into a series of shorter programs that target specific competencies. This approach would continue to meet the needs of both employers and students and be unique in British Columbia and Canada.

Continued support from divisional staff and faculty in addition to support from areas such as registration, student support, technology, across the institution will be critical for the development and growth of the Fire Prevention Officer program.

Recommendations

Recommendations that emerged from the Self-Study Report are as follows:

1. Review the terminal objectives of the job performance requirements (JPR) in each NFPA standard to ensure the evaluations adequately and appropriately assess the JPRs and then ensure alignment with course learning outcomes for all courses that are meeting and providing certification to a NFPA standard.
2. Review the membership of the PAC, to ensure broad representation with individuals who can provide strategic advice and assistance and re-establish an annual meeting calendar to ensure consistency and frequency of meetings.
3. Explore opportunities to work more closely with EMD on the scheduling and management of courses impacting FSD programs and students.
4. Review EMRG-1121 HRVA and EMRG-1334 Information Officer for continued relevance to the FPOF1.
5. Work with SHSCJ on ways to increase content related to critical incident stress management and mental health awareness.
6. Explore opportunities for articulation agreements with appropriate programs at other post secondary institutions.
7. Review program marketing strategies for opportunities to attract Indigenous students and students from regions outside of Vancouver Island and Lower Mainland of BC.
8. Review curriculum to find opportunities to incorporate Indigenous perspectives in content and activities.
9. Review course activities and assignments to ensure students have sufficient opportunities to acquire the necessary written communication skills for success in their work.

10. Explore systems to better match students needing workplace learning placements with organizations willing to provide opportunities.
11. Review curriculum to ensure textbook and reading assignments are based on current resources.
12. Explore faculty concerns related to course content.
13. Conduct an analysis to determine the market for a new credential and the appropriate area of focus for such a program.
14. Review online learning orientation materials and explore ways to better prepare students for online and virtual learning.
15. Review online courses to ensure effectiveness of design, ease of use, and consistency across courses.
16. Continue to develop the online facilitation skills of faculty through creation of a new professional development series focused on teaching and learning in an online environment.
17. Develop marking rubrics for evaluators to use when marking assignments to ensure inter-rater reliability.
18. Conduct further analysis of retention and completion data to determine if students would be better served by a series of smaller credentials for Fire Inspection, Fire Prevention, and Fire Investigation.
19. Explore issues and concerns from both students and faculty about the online learning system/Blackboard and the technical support available for online teaching and learning.

Future Directions

The Fire & Safety Division plans to continue to create online options where courses are currently only face-to-face to further expand accessibility. There are also plans to explore marketing to underrepresented markets. Program management will also explore the 30-credit structure of the program to determine if dividing it into shorter programs would improve program completion and attract new students.

2. External Review Team (ERT) Report Summary

The External Review Teams' findings largely support the observations and recommendations that were articulated in the Self Study Report.

Student and graduate interviewees provided articulate and constructive comments, highlighting concerns about the relevance of certain portions of the program, and provided insight into the question of completion rates that are lower than expected. Their suggestions about repackaging the program into smaller, more relevant components are worth considering. This information aligns with the internal recommendations #4 and #18 and in the Dean's Response.

Specifically, the External Review Team provided five additional recommendations:

1. Create greater long-term access to scheduling and availability of courses
2. Provide a waitlist for courses that are not scheduled
3. Provide one source of contact for student customer service

4. Streamline Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
5. Increase articulation agreements.

JIBC pivoted rapidly to online delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the process, they implemented new technology and developed new instructional techniques to ensure that learning could go on, and though there remain challenges with respect to technology, curriculum and instructional design, and student engagement, accessibility to the training increased. A significant portion of JIBC's target audience for the program are members of Paid On-Call fire departments with limited training budgets. The External Review Team emphasized that the principle of accessibility should remain key in any future program development.

3. Self-Study Team Response to ERT Report

The Self-Study Team accepts the findings of the External Review Team with much gratitude. There is reassurance that the internal understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of the program are consistent with External Reviewers' findings. Additionally, the interviews with faculty and students, while providing some specific and unique considerations, are also aligned with what program staff "know to be true" about the program, students, and faculty. The comments around accessibility, increased student support, and website improvements have brought those issues to the fore and will ensure that program staff keep those concerns in mind as they move ahead with the program action plan. The External Review Team has provided strategic insight to improve the program are moving in the right direction.

4. Final Recommendations & Action Plan

The site visit findings identified in the External Review Team Report focused on curriculum, online learning, scheduling and availability of courses, customer service, and PLA and articulation agreements; site visit findings from the External Review Team validated the 19 recommendations that were identified in the Self-Study Report. In addition to validating the internal recommendations, the External Reviewers included additional constructive program recommendations, as noted above in Section 2, that have been incorporated into the Program Quality Assurance Action Plan. (See separate document *Quality Assurance Action Plan.*)