



Office of the Provost &
Vice-President (Academic)

4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada
T1K 3M4

Phone (403) 329 2202
Fax (403) 329 2097

TO: Digvir Jayas
President and Vice Chancellor

DATE: June 25, 2024

FROM: Alan Siaroff
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee

RE: Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation Program Academic Quality Assurance Review

In accordance with the U of L *Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process*, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee approved the review of the Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation Program at its June 21, 2024, meeting.

The Self Study Committee for this review was comprised of: Devan McNeill (Program Review Coordinator), Sienna Caspar, and Aimee Douziech.

The review produced 4 documents:

1. Self Study Report. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received November 23, 2023.
2. External Review Report. Written by Dr. Anne-Marie Sullivan (Memorial University) and Dr. Rebecca Genoe (University of Regina) based on a site visit January 25 to 26, 2024. Received March 6, 2024.
3. Program Response. Written by the Self Study Committee. Received March 25, 2024.
4. Dean's Response. Written by Jon Doan, Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Received June 12, 2024.

Self Study Report

The Self Study Report asked for External Reviewer feedback on several areas:

- What would you recommend for the ongoing successful recruitment of internship placement supervision? What do you do to maintain this vital relationship? Does your program offer international placements? If so, what does it look like?
- How should we better capitalize on being a post-diploma and after degree program? Should we open ourselves up for different diploma programs (e.g., therapy assistant [non-TR])?
- We have had multiple failed faculty searches. What are some recommendations for ongoing recruitment of faculty?
- How do we ensure that out-of-province students are not at a disadvantage competing for internships with students in the province?

The body of the report noted several strengths of the Therapeutic Recreation program:

- Quality of instruction and instructors (e.g., all CTRSs)
- Classroom sizes
- The pass rate of the NCTRC exams
- Continued growth of the program

The following weaknesses and challenges were mentioned in the body of the report:

- Students in the BTR program have an opportunity to evaluate the advising they receive through the program evaluation and directly to the Dean's office. The BTR program provides survey questions to elicit feedback on their assigned advisor. Open-ended questions such as, "What aspects of the University of Lethbridge program do you think could improve?" and "What do you think are the strongest part(s) of the University of Lethbridge program?" We feel the open-ended questions allow for stronger feedback from students. Over the years, students have described their challenges with access to their advisor. This continues to be one of the biggest challenges we hear from the students, as the academic advisor is split between four Health Sciences programs. This results in delays in communication (e.g., emails) and booking delays for meetings.
- Some struggles with internship placements in regional (i.e., southern Alberta), other parts of Alberta, and across Canada. A potential struggle is managing these placements if/when we offer enrollment to international students.
- The electives have been a major complaint of the current students. The choices are limited, the topics are not interesting to many, and the online availability is sparse. We have recognized the limitations of the elective choices and worked with our program specialist and academic advisor to search for more opportunities. We wish to continue to search for more opportunities across the university for our students.

Recommendations from the body of the report:

- Another area that we could explore more is an increase in international students. We've had one international student in our program since 2015. This is a priority of the University of Lethbridge; however, therapeutic recreation is not well-recognized outside of North America. This makes it

difficult to recruit students other than American students. This can prove difficult with the number of American TR programs in various states.

- Our partnerships with agency sites for internships will be challenging as we continue to grow. We rely heavily on experienced supervisors to take students on, and we recognize the need to expand opportunities for students.
- Another area of focus is improving our relations with graduates. Taking more time to reach out and inquire about their employment, satisfaction with the profession, and success in the NCTRC exam are important components to track for our program. We are interested in novel ways to enhance our abilities to engage with graduates of our program.
- Lastly, we want to increase our collaboration with college programs to enhance the learning environment of all students. We have worked closely with our Alberta partners at Lethbridge College and NorQuest College. Still, we think more can be done to align the programs to reduce overlap, topics, and learning outcomes. For example, making sure the courses build on their foundation from the diploma program instead of repeating some of what they learned.

External Review Report

The External Review Report contained 27 (twenty-seven) recommendations for improving the Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation program:

Recommendations from the body of the report:

- RECOMMENDATION #1: Provide a facilitator, perhaps from the quality assurance office, to structure the various meetings, particularly when meetings are held virtually.
- RECOMMENDATION #2: Meet with instructors separately from professors due to potential power imbalances.
- RECOMMENDATION #3: Provide comprehensive self-study report that includes detailed overview of all aspects of program.
- RECOMMENDATION #4: Meet with instructors separate from program coordinator due to potential power imbalances.
- RECOMMENDATION #5: Work with the Teaching Centre to enhance experiential content in online courses to improve learning outcomes associated with leading groups, conducting assessments with clients, etc.
- RECOMMENDATION #6: Assign course numbers that distinguish between online and in-person offerings as needed.
- RECOMMENDATION #7: Determine extent to which CARTE accreditation may be creating barriers to faculty recruitment.
- RECOMMENDATION #8: Before recruiting remote academic staff members consider long term implications for such hires.
- RECOMMENDATION #9: Work with institutional analysis unit to capture accurate enrolment, retention and graduation rates for the BTR program.

- RECOMMENDATION #10: Work with institutional analysis unit to gather information post-graduation to examine competencies to determine if gaps exist in practice that correlate with gaps in prior learning/experience.
- RECOMMENDATION #11: Review admission criteria to determine competencies related to diploma compared to degree and consider if any program changes may be needed to address gaps or equivalencies.
- RECOMMENDATION #12: Work with institutional analysis unit to distribute survey for current and former students to be included in the next program review.
- RECOMMENDATION #13: Work with institutional analysis unit to distribute survey for clinical preceptors to be included in the next program review.
- RECOMMENDATION #14: Invite preceptors to participate in meeting with external reviewers in the next program review.
- RECOMMENDATION #15: Increase opportunities for group interactions and activities to enhance relationship building among students and in the community.
- RECOMMENDATION #16: Review marketing/promotional materials to ensure students are aware that the options include an online program and a blended program (rather than on-campus program).
- RECOMMENDATION #17: Consider offering the on-campus program fully in-person to enhance student experience.
- RECOMMENDATION #18: Consider scheduling some courses as two 75-minute blocks/week or three 50-minute blocks/week.
- RECOMMENDATION #19: Follow-up with clinical supervisors to assess preparedness of student interns to determine if gaps exist in online course design.
- RECOMMENDATION #20: Engage alumni as advisory panel/group to provide feedback on student intern preparedness.
- RECOMMENDATION #21: Continue to conduct site visits during internships in person where possible.
- RECOMMENDATION #22: Focus on domestic recruitment strategies and review admission criteria with an eye to expanding the relevant diploma/degree discipline areas.
- RECOMMENDATION #23: Determine whether resources can be re-allocated to increase academic advising support.
- RECOMMENDATION #24: Develop program tools such as degree maps and audit sheets to increase student engagement in program management and student accountability.
- RECOMMENDATION #25: State explicitly the relationship between the BTR and/or the academic unit and the Centre of Excellence for Therapeutic Recreation in Continuing Care.
- RECOMMENDATION #26: Provide research support to TR instructors to engage in research activities that enhance evidence-based teaching.
- RECOMMENDATION #27: Consider adding a statistics course to the program perhaps in place of one of the electives or one of the TR core courses.

Challenges discussed in the report:

- Of concern is the limited number of CTRS, PhD prepared candidates nationally. The dean and the faculty members spoke of multiple failed searches. When the program was approved in 2015, it included two professors and one instructor position. One instructor appointed was for Fall 2015 (now holds the second professor position) and the first professor was appointed in January 2016. Searches for a second professor were challenging with low numbers of qualified applicants and/or searches that resulted in candidates who left following a short tenure with the institution. Similar challenges have not been noted for instructor searches.
- The students also commented that they believed it was essential to learn with other people because the profession will require them to work with other people. They did not experience the same level of learning in online courses. Students spoke about the necessity of creating a learning environment with an emphasis on relationships because of the focus on relationship development in the field. They reported the need for increased opportunities to work with and learn from one another in the in-person environment stating the online environment was not conducive to building meaningful relationships.

Opportunities discussed in the report:

- The student handbook indicates that students cannot transfer from the on-campus program to the online program. There is no mention of whether online students can transfer to the on-campus program. It was also suggested that students cannot transfer courses between the programs. If this is the case, online courses and in-person courses that are similar should be assigned different course numbers to distinguish between online and in-person learning.

Program Response

In their Program Response, the Self Study Committee addressed the recommendations from the External Review Report:

<p>1. <i>Provide a facilitator, perhaps from the quality assurance office, to structure the various meetings, particularly when meetings are held virtually.</i></p>	<p>The Self Study Committee was unaware of this need during the site visit as this was our first time participating in the Academic Quality Assurance (AQA) process. We are happy to work with the AQA office to address this during our next review.</p> <p>Action: Coordinate with the AQA office to address the need for an external facilitator for the next AQA process.</p> <p>Priority: Low since it occurs once every seven years.</p>
<p>2. <i>Meet with instructors separately from professors due to potential power imbalances.</i></p>	<p>Since its inception, the BTR program has celebrated that professors and instructors are on equal ground regarding its operation decisions. The external reviewers note that some of the instructors “said very little” during the meeting with faculty—thus, they concluded that there was a “potential power imbalance.”</p> <p>Our experience during each of the meetings we had with the reviewers is that, rather than asking us questions and then listening to us, they instead did most of the talking. As a result, though these meetings were enjoyable, the reviewers did not capitalize on them as an opportunity to learn more about our program such that they could make well-informed and useful recommendations.</p> <p>During the faculty meeting, the few questions they did ask were all directed toward the past and current program coordinator and the internship coordinator. We are in no doubt that had they talked less and asked thoughtful questions that the whole team could have answered, everyone would have been actively engaged in this meeting.</p>

	<p>Action: As a result of this recommendation, all instructors in the BTR program were asked to submit a response directly to the chair of the AQA process for feedback.</p> <p>Priority: Low</p>
<p>3. <i>Provide comprehensive self-study report that includes detailed overview of all aspects of program.</i></p>	<p>The program provided information based on the template the University of Lethbridge developed. The template did not include some information that the externals requested to see. Had the reviewers requested this information prior to or during the site visit, we would have gladly provided it. The AQA chair may wish to review the requested information and determine whether it should be included in future templates.</p> <p>Action: Continue to work with the AQA chair regarding information needed for future Self Study reports.</p> <p>Priority: Low since it occurs once every seven years.</p>
<p>4. <i>Meet with instructors separate from program coordinator due to potential power imbalances.</i></p>	<p>This recommendation demonstrates a lack of understanding of the structure of our program. The program coordinator in the BTR program is not an 'administrative' position and does not hold any power over other BTR faculty members. The Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences is the reporting manager of all faculty, and it would be seen as a potential power imbalance if they were present during that meeting. The program coordinator is a liaison between the faculty and the Dean's office, having no direct influence over an individual's job performance or review. However, if requested, we are open to having future AQA reviewers meet with faculty without the program coordinator. Again, the BTR program celebrates the equal ground of all faculty members in this program.</p> <p>Action: Meet with the TR team to determine whether they feel it is important to schedule a separate meeting with faculty without the program coordinator present.</p> <p>Priority: Low since it occurs once every seven years.</p>
<p>5. <i>Work with the Teaching Centre to enhance experiential content in online courses to improve learning outcomes associated with leading groups, conducting assessments with clients, etc.</i></p>	<p>Given that the reviewers did not meet with any students in our online program, nor did they request to see any of our online course syllabi, nor did they ask questions about our online course delivery during the site visit, we are surprised to receive this recommendation. Despite our confusion regarding this recommendation, we can confidently say that we are addressing it since the program continually seeks ways to enhance experiential content for all students. We also work closely with the Teaching Centre on ways to enhance our curriculum annually.</p> <p>Action: Continue to engage with the Teaching Centre on enhancing experiential content. For example, inviting members of the Teaching Centre to our Therapeutic Recreation Program meetings.</p> <p>Priority: Medium, ongoing.</p>
<p>6. <i>Assign course numbers that distinguish between online and in-person offerings as needed.</i></p>	<p>The courses in the BTR program are not different and, therefore, do not need to be distinguished. The program works closely with our program specialist and the Registrar's Office on course codes (numbers).</p> <p>Action: No action is needed.</p> <p>Priority: N/A</p>
<p>7. <i>Determine extent to which CARTE accreditation may be creating barriers to faculty recruitment.</i></p>	<p>The program believes the CARTE accreditation standards are justifiable regarding faculty requirements. Our program prepares students for the NCTRC certification pathway; therefore, we expect our faculty members to be certified by NCTRC. Removing the requirement for faculty but retaining the training for students would not be appropriate for this program. We continue to think of solutions related to faculty recruitment that fit our program's needs.</p> <p>Action: Continue to brainstorm solutions related to faculty recruitment.</p> <p>Priority: Medium in preparation for an upcoming retirement.</p>

8. <i>Before recruiting remote academic staff members consider long term implications for such hires.</i>	<p>One solution to recruitment includes remote academic staff members. As with any potential solution, we will consider all the pros and cons, including the ones discussed by the external reviewers. We currently have three remote faculty members, two of whom have been remote for several years.</p>
	<p>Action: Work with Human Resources and the Dean's office on remote working conditions.</p>
	<p>Priority: Medium, ongoing.</p>
9. <i>Work with institutional analysis unit to capture accurate enrolment, retention and graduation rates for the BTR program.</i>	<p>The program understands the complexities around our program, especially accounting for on-campus, online, and Open Studies students. Having acknowledged this, we do, in fact, have this data. Had the reviewers requested it prior to, during or following our site visit, we would have gladly shared it with them. In preparation for future reviews, we will continue to work with the institutional analysis unit at the University of Lethbridge to provide a comprehensive view of all aspects of our program.</p>
	<p>Action: Ongoing conversations with the institutional analysis unit to capture BTR data.</p>
	<p>Priority: Low since we currently have this data.</p>
10. <i>Work with institutional analysis unit to gather information post-graduation to examine competencies to determine if gaps exist in practice that correlate with gaps in prior learning/experience.</i>	<p>The program recognizes our weakness in our ability to engage with managers and employers of our program alums consistently. We wish to strengthen this area for the same reasons the external reviewers recommend. We will work with the institutional analysis unit to develop strategies for engaging with managers and employers.</p>
	<p>Action: Strengthen our program evaluation survey on questions about the competencies of BTR alums. Continue to find ways to increase the response rate to this survey.</p>
	<p>Priority: High, ongoing.</p>
11. <i>Review admission criteria to determine competencies related to diploma compared to degree and consider if any program changes may be needed to address gaps or equivalencies.</i>	<p>The program frequently considers the admission criteria from the diploma and degree pathways. Our program evaluation captures important data from the first year of the student's experiences to the end of their internships. To date, no data has indicated any gaps or equivalencies that need to be addressed between our diploma and after-degree students. Had the reviewers enquired about this data prior to, during or following the site visit, we would have gladly shared this data with them.</p>
	<p>Action: Continue to implement and review the annual program evaluation. We will continue to assess the admission criteria.</p>
	<p>Priority: Medium, ongoing.</p>
12. <i>Work with institutional analysis unit to distribute survey for current and former students to be included in the next program review.</i>	<p>The program conducts our annual program evaluation with current and former students. This program evaluation is anonymous. We believe that this accurately captures the information needed for program review. Current students complete the evaluation each year and six months after they complete the BTR program. Aspects of the data were included in the Self Study report and discussed in the meetings with the external reviewers. Had the reviewers requested additional detail or more information about or from these evaluations prior to, during or following the site visit, we would have gladly shared it with them.</p>
	<p>Action: Continue to implement and review the annual program evaluation.</p>
	<p>Priority: Medium, ongoing.</p>

<p>13. <i>Work with institutional analysis unit to distribute survey for clinical preceptors to be included in the next program review.</i></p>	<p>The program conducts our annual program evaluation with clinical preceptors. This program evaluation is anonymous. We believe that this accurately captures the information needed for program review. Clinical preceptors complete the evaluation at the end of the placement experience. Aspects of the data were included in the Self Study report and discussed in the meetings with the external reviewers. Had the reviewers requested additional detail or more information about or from these evaluations prior to, during or following the site visit, we would have gladly shared it with them.</p>
	<p>Action: Continue to implement and review the annual program evaluation.</p>
	<p>Priority: Medium, ongoing.</p>
<p>14. <i>Invite preceptors to participate in meeting with external reviewers in the next program review.</i></p>	<p>The program did invite some clinical preceptors for this site visit. However, the timing did not work for them. We thought the option for virtual attendance might boost the numbers, but it did not. We will continue to develop strategies to improve this process for the next program review.</p>
	<p>Action: Schedule the meeting with preceptors after the typical work day or at lunch to boost numbers.</p>
	<p>Priority: Low since it occurs once every seven years.</p>
<p>15. <i>Increase opportunities for group interactions and activities to enhance relationship building among students and in the community.</i></p>	<p>The program will continue providing group activities and interactions to enhance relationships among students and the community. We believe we provide various opportunities to engage with each other. For example, the on-campus students engage in interactive labs, assignments on campus and off, and organized field trips across the Lethbridge area. This information was made available in our Self Study report and through discussions with the external reviewers. Since the reviewers did not ask any questions about this aspect of our program during their interviews with the instructors or program coordinator, nor did they view our course syllabi, this recommendation admittedly surprised us.</p>
	<p>Action: We will continue providing group activities and interactions to enhance relationships among students and the community.</p>
	<p>Priority: Low since we are currently engaged in this recommendation.</p>
<p>16. <i>Review marketing/promotional materials to ensure students are aware that the options include and online program and a blended program (rather than on-campus program).</i></p>	<p>In every marketing/promotional material available to prospective students, we include information about some classes being online for the on-campus program. Every year, 2 of the 15 classes offered in the on-campus program are only available online. This year, due to course release, one additional course was offered online to the on-campus students. Thus, in total, 3 out of the 15 classes offered were online for this cohort. If we promote the program as a blended, students may understand that it is 50% on-campus and 50% online. The University of Lethbridge defines blended learning as "mixed delivery modes, typically face-to-face and technology mediated." This definition does not accurately describe our on-campus program. We have reviewed our websites and consistently communicate to our students that our on-campus program requires students to take at least two online courses and an off-site internship course.</p>
	<p>Action: We will continue to communicate to our prospective students that the on-campus program includes some online courses.</p>
	<p>Priority: Low, ongoing.</p>

<p>17. Consider offering the on-campus program fully in-person to enhance student experience.</p>	<p>The program has suggested to the Dean's office that the few online classes would be best offered on campus for our on-campus students. However, as these courses are not TREC specific, we have been told that funding is not available to expand the offerings as TREC specific (i.e., not HLSC), on-campus courses. Also, we have attempted to work with faculty members who teach similar existing on-campus courses to accommodate our students, but for various reasons, we were unsuccessful. We will continue to advocate for those two courses to be offered as an on-campus option for our on-campus students; however, we understand the limitations that have, thus far, not enabled this to be the case. Had the reviewers enquired about this during our site visit, we would have gladly provided them with the important background information regarding this recommendation.</p>
	<p>Action: We will continue to advocate to the Dean's office regarding the few online courses our on-campus cohort takes.</p>
	<p>Priority: Medium/High.</p>
<p>18. Consider scheduling some courses as two 75-minute blocks/week or three 50-minute blocks/week.</p>	<p>We collect information on scheduling every year from our students. The program recognizes the few opinions expressed by students during this site visit program review; however, program evaluations from our students for the past eight years have informed us that the three-hour blocks are highly preferred. The program hesitates to make scheduling decisions based on a few students from one cohort rather than the voices of hundreds of students over multiple years of reviews.</p>
	<p>Action: We will continue seeking feedback on the BTR program's course scheduling.</p>
	<p>Priority: Low.</p>
<p>19. Follow-up with clinical supervisors to assess preparedness of student interns to determine if gaps exist in online course design.</p>	<p>The program recognizes that this site visit included one clinical supervisor's feedback about their experiences with one student intern. We constantly communicate with clinical supervisors before, during, and after the student internship experiences. In our comprehensive feedback, we have received the opposite information about the gaps between on-campus and online students. The feedback we hear most often is that our online students are better prepared for their internship experiences than the on-campus students. The clinical supervisors indicate most online students are "ready to go" from day one. The program hesitates to form a conclusion based on one clinical supervisor's opinion rather than the voices of multiple clinical supervisors over years of reviews. Had the reviewers sought information about this topic from any of the TR faculty/instructor team, the TR program coordinator, the TR Internship coordinator or the internship specialist during the site visit, we would have been able to share this important information with them.</p>
	<p>Action: We will continue seeking feedback from clinical supervisors on student intern preparedness.</p>
	<p>Priority: Low, ongoing.</p>
<p>20. Engage alumni as advisory panel/group to provide feedback on student intern preparedness.</p>	<p>We consistently seek feedback from clinical supervisors before, during, and after the internship experience to evaluate student intern preparedness. In addition, the program has an Advisory Council that welcomes alumni, clinical supervisors and managers, current students, partners, and stakeholders. We meet once a year to discuss issues related to the program evaluation, CARTE accreditation, and the Academic Quality Assurance review. We are happy to specifically bring this recommendation forward during our upcoming Advisory Council meeting. Here again, had</p>

	<p>the reviewers sought information from us about the data we have related to student intern preparedness before, during or following their site visit, we would have gladly provided it.</p> <p>Action: Continue to invite alums to sit on our Advisory Council. Continue to seek feedback from clinical supervisors.</p> <p>Priority: Low, ongoing.</p>
<p>21. <i>Continue to conduct site visits during internships in person where possible.</i></p>	<p>For the program's first several years, we held in-person site visits for internships. We absolutely see the immense value in this practice and we continue to advocate for this as the budget permits. However, since we have grown and now place students across Canada, meeting in person with each site is simply not feasible. Since we recognize the importance of maintaining relationships with our valued partners in the internship experience, we will work with the Dean's office to develop a feasible plan/process for connecting with the sites across Canada such that strong relationships are formed and sustained.</p> <p>Action: Develop a possible budget for in-person site visits for the internship course. Present the budget to the Dean's office for review.</p> <p>Priority: Medium.</p>
<p>22. <i>Focus on domestic recruitment strategies and review admission criteria with an eye to expanding the relevant diploma/degree discipline areas.</i></p>	<p>The program will continue to focus on domestic recruitment strategies with the corresponding units at the University of Lethbridge. We agree with the reviewers on domestic and international student recruitment strategies. We will focus on expanding the relevant diploma/degree discipline areas over international student recruitment strategies.</p> <p>Action: Liaison with the recruitment office on ways to enhance strategies for domestic recruitment to the BTR program.</p> <p>Priority: Medium.</p>
<p>23. <i>Determine whether resources can be re-allocated to increase academic advising support.</i></p>	<p>The program has been advocating for more academic advising support for years. We believe the current academic advisor has too many programs under their portfolio, especially as we have expanded our programming. Part of the expansion included increased academic advising for our program, but we have not been informed how that will take form. We continue to work with the Dean's office for ways to improve student access to academic advising.</p> <p>Action: Schedule a meeting with the Dean to discuss ways to enhance student access to academic advising.</p> <p>Priority: High.</p>
<p>24. <i>Develop program tools such as degree maps and audit sheets to increase student engagement in program management and student accountability.</i></p>	<p>The program has advocated for and assisted in developing tools available for students to map out their progress in the program independently. Currently, we offer suggested course sequencing on our website and in our Handbook. Students have provided positive feedback on the existing tools. The University of Lethbridge also offers a program planning guide available to all students to track their progress. Other virtual options are being discussed as a potential tool accessed through the student's Bridge account. Had the reviewers requested information about these tools, we would gladly share it with them.</p> <p>Action: No action is needed.</p> <p>Priority: Low.</p>

<p>25. <i>State explicitly the relationship between the BTR and/or the academic unit and the Centre of Excellence for Therapeutic Recreation in Continuing Care.</i></p>	<p>The reviewers accurately noted that students of the BTR program receive a free membership to the Centre of Excellence in TR for Continuing Care (TRCoE). They also accurately noted that students are encouraged to showcase their exemplary work on this site. These two details describe the extent of the relationship between the BTR and the TRCoE. Had the reviewers enquired during the site visit, they would have discovered that no continuing education units are associated with BTR student work and that students (and, in fact, all TRCoE members) are given full credit for any and all of their work that is posted and shared on the TRCoE. The program will continue to support Dr. Sienna Caspar's work with the Centre of Excellence for Therapeutic Recreation in Continuing Care and recognizes the benefits our students receive from it.</p>
	<p>Action: No action is needed</p>
	<p>Priority: Very low</p>
<p>26. <i>Provide research support to TR instructors to engage in research activities that enhance evidence-based teaching.</i></p>	<p>At the University of Lethbridge, research is not part of the regular job duties of instructors. However, the program has and will continue to support instructor's engagement in internal and external research opportunities. The Research Office will also continue to support instructor research opportunities. Additionally, the Teaching Centre supports instructor's research opportunities related to evidence-based teaching projects. For example, the Teaching Centre offers teaching fellows, teaching chairs, research funding, and more. For example, Mr. McNeill completed a research project to enhance experiential teaching strategies as an instructor in the BTR program. If instructors wish to engage in research activities that enhance evidence-based teaching, the program will support them. Had the reviewers enquired about these resources and how our instructors have used them, we would have gladly shared this information with them.</p>
	<p>Action: Continue to support instructors who wish to engage in research activities that enhance evidence-based teaching.</p>
	<p>Priority: Medium, ongoing.</p>
<p>27. <i>Consider adding a statistics course to the program perhaps in place of one of the electives or one of the TR core courses.</i></p>	<p>Our data indicates that only a very small minority of students from the BTR program go on to pursue graduate degrees and that most of these come from our post-diploma pathway. In addition, of those that do, most strongly favour qualitative rather than quantitative research methods. Thus, we do not concur with this recommendation as it would not meet the needs of the majority of our students. Importantly, the TREC 4100 "Research Methods in TR" content helps ensure that our students are research literate and able, interested, and excited about engaging in research as TR clinicians. We believe this helps to create evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence for our field and that this is a more important outcome than having our students take a course that would be focused on preparing them for graduate studies. For those few students who wish to pursue graduate studies and want to take a statistics course in preparation, we will attempt to find courses that may already be offered and suitable to meet their needs.</p>
	<p>Action: With assistance from our student academic advisor, search for existing statistics courses offered at the University of Lethbridge. See if those courses have both on-campus and online options for the BTR students. If so, work with the instructor to accommodate our students.</p>
	<p>Priority: Low</p>

Dean's Response

The Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences responded to the 27 (twenty-seven) recommendations from the External Review Report:

<p>1. <i>Provide a facilitator, perhaps from the quality assurance office, to structure the various meetings, particularly when meetings are held virtually.</i></p>	<p>This seems like a solid idea. In this specific instance a facilitator might have helped with some of the ULeth context during and between meetings, particularly given the virtual state of the review. In the two previous instances I have reviewed at other schools, they provided a facilitator (academic staff member from that faculty but not that program) and it was extremely helpful.</p>
<p>Moderate priority</p>	
<p>2. <i>Meet with instructors separately from professors due to potential power imbalances.</i></p>	<p>While there are some questions that would be unique to these three sub-groups (research support and program mainly), the majority of relevant questions here seem like they would be universal across the academic staff. I agree with the program response to reviewers here, which suggests that variable participation and input from program academic staff here might have been a function of the nature of questions, not the group, and that program coordinators are more facilitators than administrators.</p>
<p>Information</p>	
<p>3. <i>Provide comprehensive self-study report that includes detailed overview of all aspects of program.</i></p>	<p>The details identified would definitely expand the reviewers context on the program – the relative value compared to the time to assemble and the volume is the limitation. As an example, curricula would may have to span multiple years for all courses.</p>
<p>Information</p>	
<p>4. <i>Meet with instructors separate from program coordinator due to potential power imbalances.</i></p>	<p>Refer to the response to recommendation 2.</p>
<p>5. <i>Work with the Teaching Centre to enhance experiential content in online courses to improve learning outcomes associated with leading groups, conducting assessments with clients, etc.</i></p>	<p>This activity has been underway since the initial planning of the on-line program, and continues today.</p>
<p>Information</p>	
<p>6. <i>Assign course numbers that distinguish between online and in-person offerings as needed.</i></p>	<p>This differentiation is important for registration and scheduling, and this information is clearly labelled in those areas for current students. The suggestion seems to be based on the risk of students transferring courses between learning formats, but because there is no student transfer between formats in general, there is no risk of courses being transferred between formats. The courses themselves are no different, and thus in the ULeth system could not have different course numbers.</p>
<p>Information</p>	
<p>7. <i>Determine extent to which CARTE accreditation may be creating barriers to faculty recruitment.</i></p>	<p>CARTE accreditation provides valuable framework for the program, connects faculty and students with colleagues across North America, and provides a valuable distinguishing feature for our program. We will continue to plan ways to help prospective faculty understand and satisfy the CARTE requirements for instructional staff.</p>
<p>Information</p>	
<p>8. <i>Before recruiting remote academic staff members consider long term implications for such hires.</i></p>	<p>This is something we currently do, and will continue to do. The program has developed initial best practice and continues to refine those, for on-boarding and development of new faculty in either location. This includes very intentional and well attended academic and social on-line events for all academic staff.</p>
<p>Information</p>	

9. <i>Work with institutional analysis unit to capture accurate enrolment, retention and graduation rates for the BTR program.</i>	The program has done good work with the current state and completion data, particularly given this was the first QAR and thus no foundation or experience. The program has done good work with annual survey of graduates as well, and are very interested in enhancing this dataset with the assistance of IA. These discussions are currently taking place, in conjunction with a 10th anniversary celebration. It is important we take the time for these connections for a number of reasons, not least of which is the opportunity for former students to become future student placements.
High priority	
10. <i>Work with institutional analysis unit to gather information post-graduation to examine competencies to determine if gaps exist in practice that correlate with gaps in prior learning/experience.</i>	Refer to the response to recommendation 9.
11. <i>Review admission criteria to determine competencies related to diploma compared to degree and consider if any program changes may be needed to address gaps or equivalencies.</i>	The program does this annually as part of their program survey and review of students and preceptors, and discusses both internally, with our registration and scheduling lead, and annually with their advisory group. We definitely intend to continue this quality control practice.
Moderate priority	
12. <i>Work with institutional analysis unit to distribute survey for current and former students to be included in the next program review.</i>	Refer to the response to recommendation 9.
13. <i>Work with institutional analysis unit to distribute survey for clinical preceptors to be included in the next program review.</i>	These are both solid ideas. We are already doing #13 on an annual basis, but internally (still anonymous) and we could consider making this a section of next QAR and connecting select preceptors with review team.
Moderate priority	
14. <i>Invite preceptors to participate in meeting with external reviewers in the next program review.</i>	Refer to the response to recommendation 13.
15. <i>Increase opportunities for group interactions and activities to enhance relationship building among students and in the community.</i>	The program has done good work in this area with regular joint activities with Lethbridge College RT students, faculty-wide open houses of undergraduate student work, celebration of TR week, and other events. We are happy to support these events, physically and financially as possible, and community partners are invited where appropriate. These events are on top of a healthy dose of group interaction inside courses (on-line and on-campus).
Information	
16. <i>Review marketing/promotional materials to ensure students are aware that the options include and online program and a blended program (rather than on-campus program).</i>	As the program response points out, the on-campus program does not meet U of L's definition of a blended program. We are particularly careful to make sure all materials clearly identify to nature of the two programs, and we have multiple units (program, timetabling and registration coordinator, registrar's office) monitoring these carefully.
Low	
17. <i>Consider offering the on-campus program fully in-person to enhance student experience.</i>	I think I prefer the term "unify" the student experience here – we are confident that the fully on-line program is also a high quality student experience. We are examining the two courses required here with every intention to deliver them on-campus.
High priority	

18. <i>Consider scheduling some courses as two 75-minute blocks/week or three 50-minute blocks/week.</i>	Scheduling is always an interplay of pedagogy, staff and room availability, and student feedback. The program continues to collect this info year over year in their survey, and we will continue to examine those data to consider course scheduling.
	Low priority
19. <i>Follow-up with clinical supervisors to assess preparedness of student interns to determine if gaps exist in online course design.</i>	We do communicate with preceptors in this way, and have a full time placement coordinator who does both prep work, regular communication, and follow-up with all preceptors. It is difficult to claim that a negative experience for a placement is specifically attributable to a gap in course design or content rather than a personal issue between parties or poor timing for a workplace, but we can continue to use our preceptor feedback mechanisms and our annual survey of students to understand if there is more evidence of a specific issue here, related to course content or delivery.
	Moderate priority
20. <i>Engage alumni as advisory panel/group to provide feedback on student intern preparedness.</i>	The program does have an advisory panel, of alumni and non-alumni, in part for this purpose. Again, we also have this mechanism in the communication that takes place between program and internship sites and the communication that takes place between placement coordinator and internship sites. The program is strong at connecting with alumni through professional events and conferences, and has intention (and some support) to generate an alumni database in preparation for 10th anniversary celebrations in 2025.
	Moderate priority
21. <i>Continue to conduct site visits during internships in person where possible.</i>	The challenge here is that it is not uniformly possible (and getting less so every semester), and students who do not receive an in-person site visit would have justified claim to unfair treatment. We could consider some models here, like a scheduled cycle of visits (maybe in conjunction with other university activities in that area) or televisits. Both would present some other challenges.
	Moderate priority
22. <i>Focus on domestic recruitment strategies and review admission criteria with an eye to expanding the relevant diploma/degree discipline areas.</i>	This is a solid area for focus, and U of L central resources already working on domestic recruitment activities here. The new associate dean in Health Science will have marketing and communication as part of their portfolio, and TR program are encouraged to work with them to consider refining message and delivery opportunities. Again, much of this could center around the planned alumni outreach activity, as those alumni can be great recruiters at community level.
	Moderate priority
23. <i>Determine whether resources can be re-allocated to increase academic advising support.</i>	The faculty is working to increase our capacity here, through some role expansion of current admin staff (adding advising organization, triage, and initial information exchange to that role), through some targeted funding proposals (where resources for advising for a parallel program have been requested), and in annual staffing requests. Discussions continue here.
	High priority
24. <i>Develop program tools such as degree maps and audit sheets to increase student engagement in program management and student accountability.</i>	These exist, in the form of program planning guides plus on-line information. We have recently made some faculty-wide developments in this area too, wherein students can generate their own request and rationale for a personalized program evaluation when they have request related to a policy or procedure. This change will increase student accountability and it should spare some advisor time.
	Moderate priority
25. <i>State explicitly the relationship between the BTR and/or the academic unit and the Centre of Excellence for Therapeutic Recreation in Continuing Care.</i>	Students receive complementary student membership with the Centre, they can present their work (with full credit) in the KT spaces of the site. Students do not take part in continuing education available through the site until they receive certification.
	Information

26. <i>Provide research support to TR instructors to engage in research activities that enhance evidence-based teaching.</i>	Traditional research activities are not part of the instructor workload, but instructors are encouraged to stay up to date on research and are welcome to discuss research opportunities and interests with me. Internal and external opportunities and funding for research about teaching would fit into the instructor workload, and all academic staff are regularly encouraged to consider those interests.
Low priority	
27. <i>Consider adding a statistics course to the program perhaps in place of one of the electives or one of the TR core courses.</i>	The program does have a research methods course, which academic staff and students agree is the typical research literacy level needed for a practicing TR professional. The faculty does offer a third-year quantitative research methods course in on-line and in person format, and students could take that thought it would be supernumerary to their program. At this point, it is not clear that the number of BTR graduates interested in graduate research would justify a regularized course, and it is true students could pick up the requisite knowledge in course and research experiences are part of their graduate work.
Information	

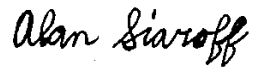
While the External Reviewers' Report contained 27 (twenty-seven) recommendations for improving and/or maintaining the Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation Program, the area, Dean Doan, and the Academic Quality Assurance Committee each felt that the recommendations were too narrow in focus and were better presented as broad goals to be met before the next review. The committee modified and consolidated the 27 (twenty-seven) recommendations into the following 6 (six) recommendations:

1. The Therapeutic Recreation program will assess its current program structure and consider:
 - a. ensuring students who have opted to take the program in person are able to take all of their core courses in person,
 - b. working with the Teaching Centre to harmonize the experiential content in online courses to improve learning outcomes associated with leading groups, conducting assessments with clients, et cetera,
 - c. providing BTR students with access to existing statistics courses offered at the University of Lethbridge,
 - d. developing program tools such as degree maps and audit sheets to increase student engagement in program management and student accountability.
2. The Therapeutic Recreation program will work with the Faculty of Health Science's Dean's Office to monitor the success of program graduates by:
 - a. considering engaging alumni as an advisory panel/group to provide feedback on student intern preparedness,
 - b. utilizing post-graduation data from Institutional Analysis to examine competencies to determine whether gaps exist in practice that correlate with gaps in prior learning/experience,
 - c. evaluating outcomes for diploma versus degree students, and online versus in-person learners.
3. The Therapeutic Recreation program will continue to conduct site visits during internships in person where possible, and communicate this process to students.
4. The Therapeutic Recreation program will explore recruitment strategies, domestic and international, and review admission criteria with an eye to expanding the relevant diploma/degree discipline areas.
5. The Therapeutic Recreation program will work with the Faculty of Health Sciences Dean's Office to determine whether resources can be re-allocated to increase academic advising support.

6. The Faculty of Health Sciences Dean's Office will discuss opportunities to support BTR instructors' desire to engage in research to inform their teaching. To comply with the Academic Staff Collective Agreement (ASCA), any opportunities will need to be specific to teaching/pedagogy and aligned with their category of employment within the ASCA.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied that the Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation program academic quality assurance review has followed the U of L's academic quality assurance process appropriately, and acknowledges the successful completion of the review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Siaroff". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr. Alan Siaroff
Chair, Academic Quality Assurance Committee
Professor, Department of Political Science

cc Michelle Helstein, PhD.
Provost & Vice-President (Academic)