

Executive Summary

In June 2018, the Academic Program Review Committee conducted a site visit and document review of the University of Victoria School of Child and Youth Care. The review committee consisted of Ben Anderson-Nathe, Chair (Portland State University, USA); Judy Finlay (Ryerson University); and Helga Thorson (University of Victoria). This report summarizes our main findings and includes recommendations for the SCYC to consider as it moves forward. The Executive Summary provides a high level overview of these findings, relative to Program Quality; People; Resources; Future Directions; and Questions from SCYC.

Quality of the Academic Program, Student Experience, and Research

The School of Child and Youth Care is unquestionably a strong academic program. It offers multiple degrees (undergraduate and graduate), is among a small handful of graduate programs nationally in the field, and offers robust curricula. The curricula reflect the SCYC's commitment to Indigenizing and decolonizing Child and Youth Care, and although this commitment is not yet evenly infused into every corner of the curriculum, SCYC is a leader in its efforts to date. The undergraduate curriculum is broad, with several specializations, multiple delivery options, and student commitment-7hz29(option)9(c)5ualz sbotCtve10.9(t)ity 10.9(t)-.5(ude)5.5(nomitment-7ha c)5u

ongoing research productivity. Without additional resources, however, it is unrealistic to assume such work can take place effectively.

People

The School of Child and Youth Care is sorely under-resourced. In recent years, the School has gone through significant personnel transitions, with several retirements and many new hires. This has brought an infusion of new energy and new perspectives; many people in the School speak of it as a culture change, toward increased collaboration and investment in the life of the School. Nevertheless, with an impending transition Director, staff and Faculty across SCYC commented that these shifts may be precarious without careful tending and shepherding over the coming years. The committee supports the School's request for additional personnel resources, both in terms of staff and direct instruction (including support for practicum coordination and oversight).

Resources

By all indications, SCYC mana

Alignment with University's Strategic Framework and Other Plans

The School of Child and Youth Care is in clear alignment with the University's Vision, which is to "be the Canadian Research university that integrates outstanding scholarship, engaged learning and real-life involvement to contribute a better future for people and the planet" (*Strategic Framework for the University of Victoria: 2018-2023*, p. 2). The School is a campus leader in several categories of the newly-released *Strategic Framework*, in particular in its research and teaching excellence, demonstrated through a variety of recent faculty awards, its dedication to reconciliation and respect regarding Indigenous students, faculty, and communities, and its commitment to engage both locally and globally. Historically, the department has shown itself to be an innovator in instructional pedagogies through its early development of online courses, and its innovation continues to evolve as seen through the commitment to include land-based teaching in the near future. What comes first above all else, is the School's alignment with the values that inform UVic's vision: "excellence in all our endeavours," "ethical and intellectual integrity," "freedom of inquiry and freedom of speech," and "equity, diversity and inclusion" (p. 2).

The School is firmly embedded in the *UVic Strategic Research Plan 2016-2021* as well as the *Faculty of Human and Social Development Strategic Research Plan 2017-2022*. The School's research extends locally and globally and is based in principles of social justice and community-engaged research. The school is a leader in the integration of research with teaching and learning. The School's initiatives also align well with the *University's Indigenous Plan 2017-2022* and its five cedar strands and the *UVic International Plan: Making a World of Difference (2017-2022)*. Attempts to recruit and support Indigenous students, hire Indigenous faculty, and engage in community-engaged research grounded in Indigenous methodologies and values have been highly successful. With 50 Indigenous students in its undergraduate program and a growing number of Indigenous students submitting graduate program applications, the School of Child and Youth Care is a campus leader in its recruitment of Indigenous students. Similarly, the School has seen an increase in the number of international applicants to both its undergraduate and graduate programs. Through memorandum of understanding with universities in Denmark and Germany, the School is able to engage in international research and teaching initiatives. Students also have ample opportunity to apply for international practicum placements.

Yet, it is important to note that the School of Child and Youth Care's outstanding campus leadership, particular in the areas of attracting Indigenous and "racialized" students, also comes with some concerns. Given that the faculty members only teach 40% of the program EETS, there is a huge reliance on sessional instructors for courses. Since sessional instructors are not expected to supervise students, the graduate supervision falls on the teaching and research faculty—which puts a severe strain on supervisory capacity. In general, SCY's faculty have a higher than average supervisory load than faculty across campus. Given student and faculty

Culture Change and Curricular Alignment

The review panel met with Faculty across various programs in SCYC, and across the board heard appreciation for the culture change among SCYC Faculty over the past several years. Many commented that they know more about one another now than they have in the past, that their relationships are less politicized than they have previously been, and that recent new hires have brought new energy and contributed to a program that is increasingly diverse (demographically, epistemologically, pedagogically). As a result, many Faculty reported feeling committed to renewal and new energy across the programs.

Still, the review panel heard repeatedly from Faculty and students that this culture change has not yet led to evenly distributed Faculty investment in SCYC curriculum or curricular alignment, which both remain shaky.

Despite ongoing progress, Faculty investment in the graduate program is higher and more evenly shared than in the undergraduate curriculum. Faculty members and directors reported that Faculty have greater knowledge of and investment in the masters and doctoral programs than the undergraduate. Further, the review panel noted ambivalence across SCYC about the core values

mentioned that they wanted increased emphasis on practical skills in the curriculum, having received an impression that Faculty expect incoming Master's students to have more work experience than is common for many to actually have.

Perhaps the most significant challenge the review panel identified in the graduate curriculum relates to the size of the program and students' timelines to completion. The magnitude of the Master's program in particular creates an unmanageable workload for SCYC Faculty. The program admits around 13 students per year and these students often take as many as four years to complete the degree. The review panel heard consistently that students tend to "stall out" after completing coursework often for two or more years. These delays are often attributed to challenges outside the coursework requirements of the thesis: funding concerns, inadequate support for students with accommodations, Indigenous and other minoritized students; and need for greater access to faculty research projects. The supervisory burden on Faculty is disproportionate compared to other similar workloads across UVic graduate programs and the Faculty is at a breaking point.