

Academic Plan

August 2012



Introduction

This academic plan for the Faculty of Human, Social, and Educational Development is based on information provided by faculty, students, and community members during discussions of where our Faculty has been and what we might become. It reflects an understanding and appreciation of the major changes that our Faculty has undergone in recent years. We acknowledge and honor our roots in the practices and history of Cariboo College and the University College of the Cariboo, and recognize that we now have full university status in British Columbia with expectations parallel to those of other members of the Research Universities Council of British Columbia. www.tupc.bc.ca

This academic plan provides us with the opportunity to build on the expectations that our communities and the Province have for us in a manner that is consistent with the aspirations of the members of the Faculty of Human, Social, and Educational Development. We see this plan as an opportunity to create a future that is bright and promising for bipartite and tripartite faculty members. We also perceive this plan as a document that will continue to evolve and to reflect new information and possibilities that will emerge in the future, while retaining its coherence with the larger Thompson Rivers University Academic Plan.

http://www.tru.ca/vpacademic/academic_plan.html

The Distinctive Nature of our Faculty

The Faculty of Human, Social, and Educational Development is a unique academic unit at Thompson Rivers University in that it is comprised of two Schools and two Departments: School of Education, School of Social Work and Human Service, Department of English as a Second Language, and Department of University and Employment Preparation. Collectively, the Faculty of Human, Social, and Educational Development offers credit and non-academic credit courses, plus programs that range from certificates and diplomas through undergraduate degrees to graduate degrees. The courses and programs are offered in Kamloops, Williams Lake, and several regional campuses.

The Faculty of Human, Social, and Educational Development attends to responsibilities in teaching and scholarship, in ways that draw upon Boyer's (1990) interpretation of these constructs:

- › **Discovery** disciplined investigation that creates new ideas and understandings, adding to the stock of knowledge
- › **Integration** making connections across disciplines, in a disciplined way, in order to interpret, draw together and bring new insights to original ideas
- › **Application** the responsible and rigorous application of knowledge to problems of consequence (to individuals, institutions and peoples)
- › **Teaching** disciplined interaction between learners and teachers intended to build skills, understandings and dispositions, and to interrogate knowledge

Macpherson (2008) also described teaching as the “disciplined interaction between learners and teachers intended to build skills, understandings and dispositions, and to interrogate knowledge and trigger further inquiry” (p. 677).

Scholarship is defined in the TRU-TRUFA Collective Agreement as “research, scholarly and/or artistic work which is creative and intellectual. Such work can occur through discovery, integration, teaching and learning, or application of knowledge and must be disseminated within the public realm.”

Conceptual Framework

There are several guiding assumptions that underpin the academic plan for the Faculty of Human, Social, and Educational Development. First, this academic plan is based on two interrelated, inextricably linked principles that guide our practice; one cannot exist for us without the other. The first principle is that research-informed teaching is fundamental to the mission of our Faculty. The second principle is that practice-informed research is basic to our Faculty. Next, our Faculty is student-centered which means that we recognize our obligations to serve, guide, and inform students in our courses and programs. Further, our curricula are multidimensional and representative of the challenges in our global society. This means that we are responsible for: facilitating critical and creative thinking, engaging the powerful and the marginalized in seeking equity and opportunity, teaching and researching so that learners gain a sense of agency, promoting civic engagement, and challenging political, social, cultural, historical, institutional, academic, and environmental boundaries. The preceding assumptions provide the basis for the following themes for our Faculty academic plan.

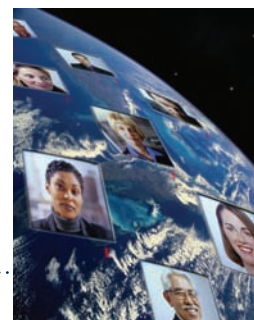
Interdisciplinarity

The Faculty of Human, Social, and Educational Development is concurrently professionally and academically focused. That is, we will attend to the information and skill sets required for professionals working in the fields of social work, human service, teaching English as a second language, education, and physical education. We will seek to create new knowledge that will inform practitioners, theorists, policy makers, and researchers.

Our faculty members constitute a community of scholars who will teach and learn across disciplines in our Faculty and across the Thompson Rivers University campus. We are guided by and respect a diverse set of epistemological and ontological paradigms that are premised upon a full range of paradigms, including postpositivism, constructivism, critical theory, participatory research, and pragmatism (See Onwuegbuzie, 2009).

Diversity

We recognize and value the different ways of knowing that students and faculty bring based on their world views and previous learning experiences. These learners will pursue a range of academic, vocational, nonacademic, and employment goals. We will engage diverse learners, who represent both mainstream and marginalized populations, in life-long learning and provide them with opportunities to live with dignity and to be integral members of a sustainable civil society.



Curriculum and Pedagogy

Our programs, policies, and practices will be student-focused and will promote social mobility. Our research will draw on theory and practice, and we will model and promote creativity, innovation, and change. Our programming will be infused with requirements for a variety of pedagogical approaches, e.g., experiential learning, reflective practice, problem-based learning, and critical thinking, among others. We will be entrepreneurial, responsive, and responsible users of information and communication technology, making us accessible to conventional and non-conventional learners. Finally, we will infuse wellness into teaching, learning, and research.

Interculturalization: Domestic and Abroad

We will honor and our programming will reflect and build upon the cultures of our region as manifested in aboriginal, immigrant, rural, remote, and urban communities. We recognize the imperativeness of collaborating with TRU Open Learning in designing and delivering programming. We recognize the importance of facilitating domestic and international student learning and of hosting international symposia and institutes on campus. As well, we will facilitate shared understandings of interculturalization through field schools, student exchanges, and faculty exchanges abroad. We will support faculty on campus and in Open Learning by providing them with intercultural workshops and training, and will promote the internationalization of scholarship and learning at home through our curricula. We will work toward enhanced educational opportunities through pilot projects and dual-degree options.

References

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