

Final Assessment Report for the 2021-2022 Cyclical Review of the Graduate Programs in Geography

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Laurier's Institutional Quality Assurance Procedures ([Policy 2.1](#)), this Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical program review process for the graduate programs in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, prepared by the Quality Assurance Office, along with an identification of strengths of the program(s) under review authored by the Dean of the Faculty of Science and the Associate Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. All recommendations made by the external review committee in their report are listed, followed by a summary of the units' response, and the decanal responses. Recommendations prioritized are listed in the Implementation Plan, with those not being prioritized for implementation noted as well.

The Final Assessment Report is reviewed and approved by the Provost and Vice-President: Academic. Following completion of the Final Assessment Report, it is approved by the Program Review Sub-Committee and Senate Academic Planning Committee. Approval dates are listed at the end of this report. Final Assessment Reports are submitted to Senate as part of an annual report on cyclical reviews, and to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance for information. Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Reports are posted on the public-facing page of the [Quality Assurance Office](#) website.

The Implementation Plan for the recommendations prioritized in the Final Assessment Report can be found at the end of this report. Units will submit their first Implementation Report two years following approval of the Final Assessment Report at Senate. The Implementation Report will include comments from the unit on actions taken toward the completion of recommendations, comments from the relevant Dean(s) related to the progress made, and comments from the Program Review Sub-Committee, which is responsible for approving the Implementation Report and deciding if further reports are required. The Implementation Report is submitted to the Senate Academic Planning Committee for information.

It should be noted that this was a unique review in that the graduate programs in Geography were, during the timeframe of the cyclical program review, offered jointly with the University of Waterloo as part of the Waterloo-Laurier Graduate Program in Geography (W-LGPIG). In the years leading up to the cyclical program review, both institutions agreed that a dissolution of the W-LGPIG would be pursued, with each university transitioning to offering standalone programs instead. The W-LGPIG outlined these goals in their Self-Study, and organized the external review process such that the external review committee would have the opportunity to provide feedback on the W-LGPIG as a whole and the potential for continued collaborations between the two universities, as well as on each institution's plans for transitioning to standalone programs. The information presented in the remainder of this Final Assessment Report reflects the unique context of this cyclical program review, which provided Laurier's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies with valuable feedback to inform its transition from the W-LGPIG to standalone programs.

SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS

The Waterloo-Laurier Graduate Program in Geography (W-LGPIG) consists of four degree programs: a Master of Arts (MA) in Geography, a Master of Environmental Studies (MES) in Geography, a Master of Science (MSc) in Geography and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Geography; these programs are referred to collectively as the W-LGPIG. The last cyclical program review for the W-LGPIG took place in 2014-2015. As a joint program between the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier, the process for the review followed each institution's Institutional Quality Assurance Processes (IQAP) for the conduct of joint program reviews, with the institution that held the directorship, in this case, the University of Waterloo, leading the cyclical program review process.

The W-LGPIG worked collaboratively to author the Self-Study, with data and input from both institutions reflected in the document. In addition to the Self-Study (Volume I), the W-LGPIG also submitted a copy of faculty curricula vita (Volume II), a volume of course syllabi, and a list of proposed external reviewers (Volume III). The review committee was also provided with a draft plan for standalone programming at each institution so that they could provide feedback on these ideas. At Laurier, a draft of the Self-Study was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Office, Dean of Science, and Associate Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prior to submission of the final version.

The two institutions worked collaboratively to ensure that the composition of the external review committee met the requirements of both universities. The external review committee for the W-LGPIG consisted of two external reviewers from outside the university, and one internal reviewer each from Wilfrid Laurier and Waterloo. Laurier's internal reviewer was selected by the Program Review Sub-Committee on February 9, 2024, and a virtual external review took place during the week of March 4-8, 2024.

The review committee consisted of **Dr. Susan Neylan** from the Department of History at Wilfrid Laurier, **Dr. Laura Gray** from Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo, **Dr. Peter Keller** from the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University, and **Dr. William Gough** from the Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences at the University of Toronto. Where appropriate, meetings were held both jointly with representatives from both institutions, and separately in light of the planned dissolution of the W-LGPIG. The institutional affiliation of meeting attendees has been noted.

During the virtual external review, the committee had met with the following individuals and groups:

- Introductory Meeting with Jeff Casello, Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs; Bruce Frayne, Dean of Environment, Chris Fletcher, Chair, Geography and Environmental Management (GEM) (Waterloo), Mary Louise Byrne, Chair, Geography and Environmental Management WLU, Sally Heath, Manager, Academic Program Development and Review, Christopher Lemieux, John McMurry Research Chair in Environmental Geography (Laurier)
- Bruce Frayne, Dean of Environment (Waterloo)
- Meeting with Chris Fletcher, Chair of GEM and Maria Strack, Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, GEM (Waterloo)
- Meeting with GEM Faculty Members (Waterloo)
- Meeting with GEM Graduate Students (Waterloo)

- Meeting with Peter Deadman, Associate Dean Graduate Studies, Faculty of Environment (Waterloo)
- Meeting with GEM Staff (Waterloo)
- Opening and closing meetings with Mary Louise Byrne, Department Chair and Christopher Lemieux, Graduate Coordinator (Laurier)
- Trish McLaren, Associate Vice-President: Academic (Laurier)
- Anthony Clarke, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Brent Wolfe, Associate Vice-President and Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (Laurier)
- Full-time Faculty in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (Laurier)
- Matt Thomas, Head of Collections and Acquisitions and Peter Genzinger, Liaison Librarian (Laurier)
- Nancy Collins, Head Librarian, Information Services & Resources; Marian Davies, Librarian, Information Services & Resources, Dana Porter Library (Waterloo)
- Graduate students in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (Laurier)
- Administrative staff from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (Laurier)
- Closing meeting with Chris Fletcher, Chair, Geography and Environmental Management (Waterloo)
- Meeting with Christine McWebb, Associate Vice-President, Faculty Planning & Policy (on behalf of the Vice-President, Academic & Provost) (Waterloo)
- Exit Meeting with Jeff Casello, Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (Waterloo)

To support the programs in their plans to dissolve the W-LGPIG and transition to standalone programming, the external review committee submitted three reports: one with recommendations pertaining to the W-LGPIG, and a separate report to each institution with recommendations specific to that university and their future plans. These reports were submitted to the universities on April 8, 2024.

In the following section, the Executive Summary from the W-LGPIG External Reviewers' Report, along with the recommendations and response from that report and the one specific to Laurier have been included, along with the relevant responses to the recommendations.

EXTERNAL REVIEWERS' REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A review of the Joint UW/WLU Joint Graduate program in Geography was conducted during the week of March 4-8, 2024. All meetings were held virtually. At both institutions we met with senior administration, the departmental Chair, graduate coordinators, faculty, staff, librarians, and students.

We submit three reports: a joint shared assessment with a small number of high-level recommendations and a report each to the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University making more specific recommendations. This is the joint shared assessment.

For over thirty years the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University shared a Joint Graduate Program in Geography. Prior to this review the institutions decided to split the joint program into two standalone programs administered separately by each institution. The reviewers were not asked to weigh in on the merits of this move but rather the implications of the move and the future trajectory and quality of the independent programs.

We do note that the two departments with differing complement paths had grown apart, and that this was exacerbated by the pandemic isolation. This dissolution is thus a logical step in evolution for this arrangement. It makes intuitive as well as business sense. It will eliminate some of the challenges and hurdles associated with efforts to manage the administration and logistics of a joint program under two independent bureaucracies while offering opportunity to maintain the strengths that were associated with a joint initiative. These include access to each other's research faculty for collaboration as well as graduate courses. The dissolution also allows the two Departments to focus attention on the strategic visions and needs of their own institutions that may not necessarily have aligned with continued joint program delivery.

At both Institutions, many students and faculty expressed a desire to maintain the positive aspects of the Joint Program, including a sense of community among geographers, access to the broad range of courses offered by both geography departments, and faculty membership on supervisory committees. Both Departments have noted that where there exist shared research interests or research clusters that span cross the two units, these will very likely continue to thrive collegially. There continues to be strong interest to access each other's faculty for membership on student supervisory committees, while recognizing that the dissolution will also allow access to faculty from the other institution to act as external examiners as long as all conditions of potential real or perceived conflicts of interest are addressed.

Both institutions are well suited to continue to host excellent graduate programs in Geography and are poised to continue this tradition. The Joint Program was an exemplar of Geography graduate education and multiple generations of well-trained geographers continue to populate geography and related programs at universities across Canada and throughout the world. They have been key contributors to government, consulting, industry and other forms of education.

Both Departments have given thought to a transition period to facilitate dissolution, and to what the individual programs must address to transition to independence. Both Departments are aware that over the years they have created many graduate courses reflecting individual faculty members' research strengths that are not delivered on a regular basis because of lack of teaching capacity and/or ongoing student demand. There is recognition that this may be misleading to prospective students, and that there is a need to critically evaluate the slate of graduate courses offered with a view to eliminating those courses too specialized or redundant. In addition, the Departments recognize the opportunities for some course rationalization by minimizing duplication of course material at the graduate level taught simultaneously in more than one academic unit within their own institution. Both departments see logic in avoiding such duplication by cross listing and/or joint delivery of these courses, and/or accessing each other's courses where mutually acceptable arrangements can be made.

We suggest that the only real need for possible course duplication going forward is for one or two courses required by all graduate students at each institution that include coverage of the research environments, bureaucracies, program requirements, funding opportunities and supports unique to each institution. These required courses often also are designed to help foster a sense of community amongst the students. Indeed, it is

the difficulty in meaningfully sharing such a course across two institutions that in part created some of the past challenges.

While it is yet not fully clear on how the two emerging programs will achieve programmatic distinctiveness, this process has begun, including efforts for each department to have visioning exercises. This of course does not mean there are not common themes or directions that the two programs can pursue, such as a focus on indigeneity in response to the 2015 TRC report, and the climate change crisis.

Both Departments are cognizant of and have communicated sound awareness of the realities associated with current financial situation faced by universities, challenges associated with international graduate student recruitment in Canada, as well as the general trends in graduate studies in general, and in geography and environmental studies / management specifically, including growing emphases on interdisciplinarity and emerging opportunities for growth in course based and professional graduate programming.

Both Departments have a long history of active graduate programs at both, the Master and PhD level, and both have begun to engage with course-based / professional Master programs. Both have a long history of participating directly and indirectly in interdisciplinary scholarship.

The pandemic was a significant disruptor requiring change and adjustments on the fly to maintain graduate program delivery. This was true for the two institutions as well as the two Departments. Significant impacts have been on methods of course delivery with a significant switch to on-line and remote delivery, in some cases temporary limitations to physical access to some facilities and services on campus during the pandemic, and transition to a remote work environment (primarily from home) with associate implications to sense of community and in-person access. The long-term implications of the pandemic years remain unknown and we do not make the assumption that it will be a return to pre-pandemic business as usual. It is foreseeable that the pandemic will have some long-lasting impacts on how education is delivered, and how we engage with each other as a community, including how faculty and supervisors interact with their students.

W-LGPIG RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

Recommendation #1: Continue to develop post Joint program distinctiveness capitalizing on within institution opportunities.

University of Waterloo Response: Given that the Joint program will be dissolved, and a revised graduate program put in place for the 2025/2026 academic year, we will be focusing on establishing and nurturing better connections at the graduate level within the University of Waterloo Faculty of Environment and across UW in general. We will still maintain strong connections between WLU and UW, and expect that for faculty with complementary research programs, this type of exchange will be both natural and easy to facilitate using the existing faculty cross-appointment process.

Wilfrid Laurier University Response: We agree with the importance of developing a distinctive identify for the standalone Graduate programs in Geography. The recent transition of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies to the Faculty of Science has opened new cross-disciplinary opportunities for the science

side of environmental management. The Department has, for example, developed a new interdisciplinary Undergraduate Option in Climate Change Management, which may evolve into a full degree program in the future. This transition has also provided the Department with important opportunities for faculty renewal – a new Geomatics faculty member, Jason Goetz, was hired in July 2024, and a Human Geography Environment Interactions hire is in process.

During the external review, the reviewers commented on the value of our one-year MA/MES field in Environmental Data Analytics (EDA). This new field received positive student feedback and is one of the ways Laurier’s Geography graduate programs are differentiating themselves.

The standalone program will continue WLU’s large presence in the Geography Research community in Canada. Longstanding research collaborations are expected to continue to thrive informally, even without the administrative overhead of the joint program.

Recommendation #2: Intentional action plan to foster post pandemic sense of community at both institutions.

University of Waterloo Response: The launch of the revised graduate program in Geography will provide a platform for engaging students and faculty through an increased sense of ownership over the program, its components, and outcomes. We will have a program that is ours to invest in and grow. This change, while seemingly administrative, will provide a strong sense of momentum and reinforce collegiality around both the Department of Geography and Environmental Management, and the Faculty of Environment. Already, through the process of making modifications to the program, we have reached out to countless stakeholders across the Department and Faculty, establishing and nurturing relationships that will enable us to bring together faculty and students via the revised program. This will include such items as easier cross-listing of courses offered by different units within the Faculty of Environment, providing our students with increased breadth of offerings to better tailor their educational experience to their own personal learning objectives.

With our revised graduate program, we are implementing a graduate ‘Homeroom’ course that will act as a cohort building opportunity for each entering cohort of students. This course will serve as a way to communicate both the scholarly pillars of Geography as a discipline, as well as develop the social and cultural aspects of the department. This course is a two-term (September to April) course, that culminates in a research proposal colloquium/celebration open to the entire department.

Wilfrid Laurier University Response: We agree with the importance of community-building amongst students, especially in the years following the pandemic. During 2023, several focus groups were conducted with current Geography graduate students to obtain their input on the proposed changes to the standalone program curriculum. One of themes of these conversations was cohort and community-building within and outside of the program curriculum, and we have addressed these needs in the revised standalone program curriculum.

The Graduate Seminar in Science, Society and Sustainability for both Master’s and doctoral programs will provide many opportunities for all incoming graduate students to meet and to discuss perspectives on research in the various sub-disciplines. All Master’s students will also take a shared research seminar in which they will

develop and share their research ideas. Students in the EDA field form their own sense of cohort, with several required courses that all students take.

Recommendation #3: Colloquium series at both institutions to foster bi-institutional community and connections with geographic community more widely – we recommend that the two Departments consider organizing and delivering such a colloquium jointly perhaps by taking responsibility for alternative colloquium time slots.

University of Waterloo Response: As part of our refreshed graduate program, UW will have a spring colloquium component where first-year student cohorts present their planned research to the UW community. At this point we do not have plans to formally share a colloquium with WLU. Certainly, there will be opportunities to cross-advertise specific presentations from research groups or visiting researchers, however cross-institutional organization was one of the main challenges of the joint program and we do not plan to reinstitute a formal cross-institution colloquium.

Wilfrid Laurier University Response: The Master's research design course (GG690) provides a forum for students to share progress on their research work with their peers, similar to the intent of a colloquium.

The department is also discussing an internal colloquium where graduate students will present their research proposals to one another and to the faculty members, as has been done successfully in the Department at the undergraduate level.

CAGONT is another existing venue for this type of collegiality-building exercise. We recognize the importance of this community-building for our graduate students as future geographers. In the joint program, students were required to attend this conference in the fall. We anticipate that this expectation will continue in the standalone program.

We acknowledge that there are some administrative challenges with a joint colloquium, but we are open to continuing to discuss a collaborative colloquium with UW in the future should it prove to be feasible and beneficial to students.

Recommendation #4: Develop processes to ease the administrative overhead in cross-institutional accessing of graduate courses, and cross-institutional availability for faculty membership on student supervisory committees.

University of Waterloo Response: The existing OVGS (Ontario Visiting Graduate Student) process is well-established and straightforward for staff to process students taking graduate courses at other Ontario institutions. Similarly, adjunct appointment of faculty within other departments, schools, and universities is well-established and a very straightforward procedure, requiring the completion of a one-page form, appointee CV, and then graduate chair approval. Currently GEM has 49 faculty members as adjunct appointments from external departments across Ontario, Canada, and international universities, so this process is quite common, and the procedure is well-established administratively.

Wilfrid Laurier University Response: We agree with UW that the established OVGS process will continue to be the mechanism by which students can register for courses outside their home institution. This is a sector-wide system that Laurier uses across its graduate programs and has proven to be sufficiently effective.

Likewise, we do not feel that the current process for faculty membership on student supervision committees is overly burdensome and Laurier has a well-established process for achieving this.

Recommendations Not Selected for Implementation (UW)

As described above, we are choosing to not implement recommendation #3 around developing a joint colloquium between UW and WLU. This type of joint requirement was a point of friction in the pre-existing joint graduate program and required significant overhead and administrative time to organize. There would also be questions about how a colloquium would connect to required courses, such as a Geography Homeroom, which has its own colloquium requirement. For example, are students required to attend a hypothetical joint WLU/UW colloquium? Will they be graded on attendance or other work attached to it? Even the synchronization of two different institutional calendars can be challenging, as was experienced during the recent years of the joint program. Rather than institute a formalized colloquium, we will continue to ensure good communication between the two departments in terms of sharing news of upcoming speakers or invited guests.

LAURIER RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES

The External Reviewers' Report specific to Laurier included 30 recommendations to inform the future of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies graduate programs as they transition to standalone offerings. All recommendations have been listed verbatim below, followed by a summary of the Department's response, and responses from the Dean of the Faculty of Science and the Associate Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Recommendation WLU1: If it has not done so already, the Department should complete these changes.

Unit Response: We are pleased to hear that the external review committee is supportive of the changes that we are proposing and discussed with them during the external review. Following confirmation of our approach to these changes by the Quality Council, our plan is to complete the curriculum change proposals associated with these changes and have them approved as soon as we can during the 2024-2025 academic year, so that we can begin to promote them to students.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I support the action planned by the Department to complete the curriculum changes necessary to offer standalone graduate programs starting in Fall 2025.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department has had advanced discussions on curriculum reform for their master's and PhD programs, which will enhance ability for their graduate students to achieve the learning outcomes that are already in place. Furthermore, their proposed approach will serve as a very useful template for other graduate programs.

Recommendation WLU2: That the project-based Master's program not be a direct-entry option for students but serve as an option for students struggling to complete the requirements of the research-based program.

Unit Response: The reviewers refer to a "Project-based Master's", which is our course-based Master's degree with a Major Research Paper (MRP). It is important to offer students pathways to degree completion that meet different personal and professional needs and since there are no unique courses for this program, there is no cost to retaining it. This program is available for MA (Master of Arts) and MES (Master of Environmental Studies) students only, as the MSc is only available as a thesis-based program. Over the last several years, the MRP had few students request to begin their graduate programs in the MRP (3 students from 2018 to 2024) and often, students transferred into the program when their circumstances prevented them from completing a research-based degree. The direct entry pathway is utilized infrequently but does not have added cost. We plan to revisit this program once our standalone program has been approved.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: It is appropriate that the MRP-based program would be available for students to transfer into, even with the recognized direct entry; such transfers are always an option upon application.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: It is not unreasonable to consider retaining the MRP option for direct entry even though it has not recently attracted very many students, provided sufficient courses can be offered to ensure the degree can be completed in one year. As identified by the Department, there may be personal reasons or professional goals where this is a desired pathway for potential applicants to the MES and MA programs. I agree that there may be situations or circumstances where MA and MES students are unable to complete their theses, and so the MRP presents a viable option for completing their degree.

Recommendation WLU3: Clearly differentiate research based from course based graduate programming.

Unit Response: The Program commits to ensuring that the distinctions between the course-based and research-based program options are made clear to students in promotional materials. Existing calendar language already clearly differentiates the course-based from the research-based programs.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: To be clear, all graduate programs are meant to have research components; the distinction should be between course-based (with or without MRP) and thesis-based Master's programs. Some other Universities have attempted to distinguish the two by restricting the MA/MSc designation to the thesis-based programs, and defining the name of course-based programs, such as Master of Business Administration. Such distinction can be helpful, but not necessary with clear descriptions of the programs within the Graduate Calendar, as is the case with Laurier.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Current calendar and program website landing page language clearly distinguish the different options for the MA and MES programs.

Recommendation WLU4: That no guaranteed funding support be associated with the course-based Master's option.

Unit Response: The current practice is not to offer funding to international course-based Master's students while domestic students receive funding.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I discourage the practice of providing funding to course-based programs, at least across the Faculty of Science, to provide consistency with the other programs in its sphere, both here at Laurier and beyond. Hence, I concur with the Reviewers that this should change.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I agree with the Dean of Science. Current practice at Laurier is that graduate students do not get offered funding in programs where coursework is the only option and I support the Dean of Science in recommending that this should also be the case for coursework students where there is other degree (i.e., thesis, MRP) options.

Recommendation WLU5: There should be a small set of graduate courses specific to the research-intensive degrees advancing research skills and competencies while also helping to build community amongst students in this program option. These courses could be delivered jointly to Master's and PhD students as long as there is a clearly articulated differences in expectations.

Unit Response: The GG700/800 course is an example of this in the existing joint program. The Department plans to continue requiring this course in the standalone program configuration. Students in both Master's and PhD programs will take this course, which will focus on professionalization skills and building community within the department's graduate students. We plan on using the ASPIRE programming provided through the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies as the basis for the professional development and incorporating milestones for the program (these might include literature review, completed proposal, other research skills like grant writing). Master's students will be required to take a course on Research Design and this course may be recommended to PhD students at the discretion of the advisor. Advisors might require students to take other courses based on individual research projects and student backgrounds.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I fully support the Department's response, and would expect that appropriate research skills are developed through conducting the thesis research.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department's proposed curriculum reform will indeed require graduate students to take a small number of graduate courses that are specifically designed to enhance their research skills and prepare them for conducting their thesis/dissertation research. The Department's intent to leverage ASPIRE offerings, Laurier's professional skills and development training program, will contribute to this effort.

Recommendation WLU6: If not completed already, finalize review of all existing required and elective graduate courses with an eye to 1) eliminating all courses that have not been offered in some time, 2) offering a small suite of courses that a) focus on methodologies, b) meet the core and elective requirements of course based Master program(s), and c) offer generic seminar shells to deliver customized courses in cognate areas of the discipline (“Seminar in Human Geography”, Seminar in Physical Geography, ..., perhaps re-thought versions of the old 620, 640, 660, etc.).

Unit Response: This review began during the 2023-2024 academic with a series of housekeeping changes (e.g. deleting courses that had not been taught in some time). The review of all course offerings and program curriculum will be finalized through the transition to standalone programs. This review is anticipated to begin in September 2024 with goal of offering the standalone program beginning in September 2025.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I support the recommendation and recognize that the Department is taking action to find efficiencies for both them and their graduate students.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department has already taken steps in this direction by deleting several courses that have not been taught in many years and have had advanced discussions on identifying a manageable number of required and elective courses needed to meet degree (including options) requirements.

Recommendation WLU7: That these courses be viewed primarily as providing a foundation of geographic knowledge and advancing requisite critical thinking, but with expectations of evaluation components that demonstrate capacity for synthesis and independent thinking.

Unit Response: The delivery of foundational geographic knowledge will be achieved through the Graduate Seminar in Science, Society and Sustainability (GG700/800) and the GG690 Research Design course in the standalone program. Any shortfalls of foundational knowledge will be accommodated in the choice of electives.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I fully support the Department’s response.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department has a plan in place to ensure that the courses offered will provide their graduate students with the knowledge and skills listed in the recommendation.

Recommendation WLU8: The generic seminar courses always carry an appropriate subtitle when offered to differentiate delivery from one year to the next.

Unit Response: Special Topics courses always have a title to differentiate them from year to year; this is common Laurier practice. In addition, the course number is accompanied by a letter to help distinguish one from another and to prevent students from taking the same course twice.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: No action required.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department's response fully addresses the recommendation.

Recommendation WLUg: That WLU GES and UW GEM collaborate on ensuring mechanisms for graduate students to access each other's graduate courses with minimal bureaucratic fuss or additional cost to the students.

Unit Response: We agree with this recommendation and are committed to ensuring that Laurier and Waterloo students can take courses at the other institution with minimal administrative burden. This is possible through the established Ontario Visiting Graduating Student (OGVS) process. Through this process, students pay tuition to their home institution and the accounting is worked out institutionally.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: No action required.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: As the Department indicates, taking graduate courses at other institutions in Ontario is facilitated by the Ontario Visiting Graduating Student (OVGS) process.

Recommendation WLU10: That there be documented clarity on guidelines, policies and procedures that will allow individual faculty members to serve on supervisory committees at the other institution, or act as external examiners, but likely not both.

Unit Response: Regulations state that the primary supervisor must come from the institution in which the student is registered. However, a co-supervisor could come from the other institution if they have Graduate Faculty Status. An existing process to grant adjunct status already exists.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: No action required.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Laurier's regulations for the thesis advisory committee (for master's students) and the dissertation examination committee (for PhD students) permit faculty members from other institutions to serve, following approval of their nomination for Graduate Faculty Status.

Recommendation WLU11: That a fast-track option be developed, enabling an intentional undergraduate to graduate program pathway.

Unit Response: We agree with this recommendation and the idea has been presented to the Department-in-Council (DIC). There was approval from the DIC to investigate this, so it will be considered and the feasibility and logistics for this discussed with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies during the next academic year.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: As for others across the Faculty, I support the Department's investigation of a direct entry pathway for strong, committed students from their undergraduate to graduate degrees.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Laurier has other intentional undergraduate to graduate pathways (i.e., BA+MA; BA+MBA with Co-op) that could serve as useful examples to the Department.

Recommendation WLU12: That joint senior undergraduate / graduate courses be encouraged as long as differences in expectation are clearly articulated.

Unit Response: We agree with this recommendation. At Laurier, these undergraduate/graduate courses are referred to as “twinned” courses, in which senior undergraduate and graduate students benefit from each other’s expertise in a shared classroom. The differentiated expectations for each degree level are codified in separate syllabi, with distinctive course assessments appropriate to each group of students.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: No action required.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: This can be an effective (and efficient) approach, and I support the Department investigating this possibility for their courses, where appropriate.

Recommendation WLU13: That the Department develop a bi-weekly colloquium series jointly organized by faculty and graduate students (perhaps as part of delivery of the core required course focusing on developing research skills and building community) that attracts speaker of general interest covering contemporary topics and current research.

Unit Response: We agree with the intent of this recommendation. Previously there was a staff position dedicated to this, but the position was discontinued. This colloquium series, or another initiative that captures the intent of the recommendation, could be built into the GG700/800 professionalization course.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I support the implementation of this recommendation through an existing course.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I agree with the Dean of Science – this may be best managed through an existing course and GG700/GG800 is likely most appropriate.

Recommendation WLU14: That the Department consider organizing and delivering this jointly with GEM at UW perhaps by taking responsibility for alternative colloquium time slots.

Unit Response: This recommendation also appeared in the Joint Program Report to both UW and Laurier, and we responded to it there. We are open to discussing with University of Waterloo Geography and Environmental Management a plan for colloquia that complement each other and provide the greatest opportunities for our graduate students.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I support the Department’s attempt to implement this recommendation, recognizing that both Universities have to come to a mutual agreement on structure and management.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: This is certainly an avenue worth exploring.

Recommendation WLU15: That such a colloquium series be considered as a forum not only to bring in invited guest speakers from the outside, but also allow junior faculty and PhDs close to completion to share their insights.

Unit Response: Related to recommendations 13 and 14, should we move forward with a colloquium series, we could see the value in using that forum for junior faculty and doctoral students to share their research. If UW does not wish to participate, then WLU will develop such a series our own, either as part of a planned course in the programs or outside of it.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I support the Department's position and proposed action.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: This is an excellent approach. Perhaps the fall term of the colloquium (guest speakers from outside the program) could be managed by the course instructor assigned to GG700/GG800 and the winter term part of the colloquium (junior faculty; advanced PhD students) could potentially be managed by the Graduate Coordinator in collaboration with senior PhD students.

Recommendation WLU16: That such a colloquium series include opportunity for socialization.

Unit Response: Like the previous recommendations related to this, we would look for ways to ensure that a socialization component is incorporated into a colloquium series. Cohort-building and community will be priorities of the standalone program curriculum and the importance of this has been discussed with current GES graduate students in a focus group as part of the standalone program planning.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I support the Department's position and proposed action.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department is cognizant of the importance of community building and that social activities associated with the colloquium series could contribute to this effort.

Recommendation WLU17: Identify and resolve discrepancies between WLU FGPS policies and procedures and long-established practice in Geography with flexibility to grandparent practices where they make intuitive sense and appear to be working, otherwise asking WLU GES to change practices to align with institutional rules.

Unit Response: We agree with the importance of this recommendation and the Department will revise its policies to be consistent with FGPS / institutional policies and procedures.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I strongly encourage the Department to implement this recommendation as proposed/planned.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: This work is already underway, with respect to membership of dissertation examination committees for example.

Recommendation WLU18: That the Department collaborate with FGPS and WLU to develop recruitment strategies focusing especially on students from the North and rural areas.

Unit Response: Recruitment for research-based programs would not make sense given that advisors are needed and not all advisors have capacity for new graduate students each year. Research students are attracted to the researcher, not the program. The Department will investigate recruitment strategies for the EDA field which is course-based. Northern researchers recruit by their own means as an individual exercise. At WLU, FGPS is not involved in recruitment.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: A central recruitment plan for graduate students is indeed possible for course-based programs, but as noted by in the Department's response, not possible for thesis-based students. That said, programs and opportunities in general could be promoted at graduate recruitment fairs across the Province and Canada. However, appropriate funding is not available to FGPS to participate in such. The Faculty of Science plans to develop its own position for such promotion of its graduate programs and the recruitment of course-based students.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I concur with the practice described by the Department regarding research-based students. It is correct that FGPS is not resourced to develop recruitment strategies. For the EDA field, Julie Hummel (Executive Director, International) and her team can support international graduate student recruitment efforts.

Recommendation WLU19: That WLU and its Faculty of Science and FGPS recognize and celebrate the long tradition of graduate studies and research strength in its GES unit as flagships driving the new Strategic Plan and invest in the unit to ensure that strategic faculty replacements and support staff are motivated and incentivized to build on this strength instead of seeing it erode.

Unit Response: We agree with this recommendation and appreciate the review committee including it in their report, however, it is outside of the scope of the Department's authority to implement. This recommendation will be shared with the relevant units for further consideration.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: The Department's research activities are indeed prominently highlighted in the draft Strategic Research Plan.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Remarkably, the graduate programs of GES contribute to the vast majority of the 67 Research Strengths among 6 Research Themes listed in the draft Strategic Research Plan. The Department also serves as an excellent example of Objective 2.2 in the new Strategic Academic Plan (i.e., Laurier will strategically grow the diversity and capacity of our professional and research-based graduate programs; <https://www.wlu.ca/about/discover-laurier/strategic-initiatives/academic->

[plan/assets/resources/strategic-academic-plan-2023-2028.html](https://www.laurier.ca/plan/assets/resources/strategic-academic-plan-2023-2028.html)) with its long-distinguished record of research excellence and recent addition of the course-based Environmental Data Analytics field of study.

Recommendation WLU20: That in order to walk the talk of its Strategic Plan, WLU seek ways formally to recognize graduate student supervision as part of teaching load.

Unit Response: We agree wholeheartedly with the value of this recommendation, but teaching load and recognition for graduate student supervision is governed by the Collective Agreement, so implementing this recommendation is not within the Department's control.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: As in the past, I welcome continued discussion on how to implement this recommendation while covering the teaching of all scheduled courses within the financial constraints of the University (and sector).

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Faculty workload is outside the scope of FGPS. Nonetheless, I support the perspective of the Dean of Science. In addition, graduate student supervision can be recognized in annual applications for course remission by faculty members, as described by the Collective Agreement.

Recommendation WLU21: That preference be given to scholarship support for graduate students applying to work with junior faculty and mid-career faculty seeking to rejuvenate a stalled research program, with expectation that successful mid-career and senior scholars will subsequently find their own funds to support graduate students.

Unit Response: We understand the rationale for this recommendation, but on principle, we do not agree with it, as there are other ways to support junior faculty. As is typical at other institutions, scholarship support is based on student merit and academic performance and/or demonstrated need, rather than who the student's supervisor is going to be.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: In general, I concur with the Department. That said though, there is some student-based funding that could be targeted to early-career faculty members, such as the USRA program (as adopted by other Universities in the sector). I encourage the Department to explore this and other similar opportunities at the graduate level.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Likewise, I support the Department's view on this matter. The Dean of Science has made an excellent suggestion regarding the USRA program that should be given consideration. In support of junior faculty, Laurier also has the annual Early Career Researcher award competition, which a member of the Department has recently received.

Recommendation WLU22: That efforts and resources be invested to explore non-conventional funding to support the research mission and allow faculty to building minimum and/or competitive graduate funding packages.

Unit Response: Individual faculty researchers seek funding available to them. There is no ability for the Department itself to seek out funding.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: In fact, the Department can (and does) work with the Dean and Development Office to seek such support, and this will continue.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Dean of Science has indicated that such efforts will continue.

Recommendation WLU23: That the Department review its own minimum funding policies for PhD and research-based Master students and strive to do its best to be more reflective of a “living wage”.

Unit Response: We agree with the review committee about the importance of graduate students being able to achieve a living wage through their funding packages, however, the minimum guaranteed funding packages are set at an institutional level. We will discuss as a Department any ways in which we can augment the funding package of our research-based Master’s and doctoral students.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: Indeed, Laurier imposes a minimum level of graduate student support for doctoral students, but not for Master’s students. Some programs across the Faculty of Science have imposed their own internal minima for both levels of graduate students, and the Department is encouraged to explore for their own programs.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I agree with the Dean of Science. The Department should engage in this discussion. As indicated, some other graduate programs in Science have raised their internal minimum funding of research-based master’s and PhD students to improve financial support and to remain competitive. This should be considered in grant applications where HQP training is included.

Recommendation WLU24: That the Department team up across campus and possibly take a leadership role at Wilfrid Laurier University to explore funding opportunities for international students to offset their inabilities to draw on tri-council scholarships and selective provincial funds.

Unit Response: We are happy to engage in any institutional efforts to provide international students with funding to support them during their programming. We will consult with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies about any opportunities to do so.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: I applaud the Department’s intent to address this recommendation.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Current practice is to offer a small number of funding packages to international students in research-based master’s and PhD programs. If the Department is

interested in receiving more of these packages, those are discussions to be had with the Dean of Science. Members of the Department may be interested in the Mitacs program (<https://www.mitacs.ca/>), which considers international students eligible.

Recommendation WLU25: That the Department consult with graduate students and then review how it communicates with prospective and accepted graduate students to be as up-front and welcoming about graduate studies in the Department as well as living in Waterloo region.

Unit Response: The Department consults regularly with students to ensure that its programming and communication are meeting student needs. Both surveys and focus groups, for example, were undertaken as part of this cyclical program review process as well as in the planning for the standalone programs. We will use this recommendation to seek input from future cohorts of graduate students about any information that they felt was lacking about being a graduate student in GES and/or living in Waterloo region.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: The Department plans to take appropriate action.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: I am in support of the actions the Department intends to take.

Recommendation WLU26: That the Department review, in consultation with graduate students, how graduate student life and activities can be supported in a welcoming and constructive environment.

Unit Response: Similar to our response to Recommendation #25, we currently do and will continue to engage with our graduate students on a regular basis to determine how we can improve their curricular experience in the program as well as their co-curricular experiences while at Laurier.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: The Department plans to take appropriate action.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Development of a colloquium series, as discussed earlier in response to recommendations 13-16, could contribute to this effort.

Recommendation WLU27: That the Department actively support mechanisms for the graduate students to communicate with each other, and that printing and display of posters announcing events organized by graduate students be welcome, encouraged and facilitated.

Unit Response: These practices are already in place within the Department. There are existing dedicated spaces for graduate student posters. The Graduate Administrative Assistant facilitates printing for graduate students when needed.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: No further action is necessary.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department is already engaged in these activities, in support of graduate students.

Recommendation WLU28: We encourage that such a website / handbook be designed, preferably in close collaboration with the graduate students.

Unit Response: The standalone program will allow us to develop a dedicated web presence for the GES graduate programs. The handbook idea can be realized by development of a pdf document that will be shared with all incoming graduate students via email.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: The Department plans to take appropriate action.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Recently, Meena Sharify-Funk (Graduate Coordinator for the MA Global Justice, Religion & Culture and PhD Religious Studies programs) has developed excellent handbooks for their graduate students. I'm sure Meena would be willing to share. Contact: msharifyfunk@wlu.ca.

Recommendation WLU29: That the Department, with graduate student input, review existing teaching assistant training and onboarding efforts and revise or augment as judged appropriate in consultation with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Unit Response: In the standalone program, students will be required to complete professionalization modules through the ASPIRE program and the topics proposed in this recommendation will be covered.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: The Department has taken appropriate action to address this recommendation.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: Encouraging, or requiring, graduate students to enrol in workshops offered under the 'Teaching Development' pillar of ASPIRE could contribute to addressing this recommendation.

Recommendation WLU30: That attention be given to ensuring a safe, healthy and collegial working environment in the Department, and that expectations of staff and faculty remain reasonable and achievable without creating inequities or concern for wellness / health.

Unit Response: The Department has a firm desire to create a healthy and inclusive work environment, and this is supported at the Faculty level.

Dean of the Faculty of Science: Indeed, the Faculty Office is dedicated to working with all of its Departments to ensure a safe, healthy, collegial and productive working environment.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department response indicates commitment to addressing this recommendation.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

Dean of the Faculty of Science: The Department has offered attractive graduate programs for over 30 years, and over that time it has become the foundation for the research-intensity of the unit that is recognized both within and beyond Laurier. The program is supported by the strength of the Graduate Faculty members, which includes three current (and two former) Canada Research Chairs, the UNESCO Chair on Food, Biodiversity and Sustainability Studies, and the John McMurry Research Chair in Environmental Geography. Associated with the Department and its faculty members is an important Government of the Northwest Territories- Wilfrid Laurier University Partnership, as well as the Cold Regions Research Centre, Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, the International Migration Research Centre, and the Laurier Institute for Water Science, all of which provide exciting opportunities for their graduate students.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department has a long and distinguished history of offering excellent research-based graduate programs built on the research strengths of its faculty members and affiliated research centres, and spanning fields of environmental science, geomatics, environmental and resource management, and human geography. The Department offers multiple degrees associated with these fields at the master's level (MSc, MES, MA) as well as a comprehensive PhD program. The Department has capitalized on new emerging trends by recently developing the Environmental Data Analytics field to offer course-based (with placement) master's training for graduate students interested in data-intensive careers.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

Dean of the Faculty of Science: The Reviewers provided an insightful report and a number of recommendations designed to enhance the already strong graduate programs the Department offers. Many of the items and issues noted by the Reviewers were already recognized by the Department and had begun to address them. This Report validates their plans to continue providing their strong program autonomously (*viz.*, independent of UWaterloo), while retaining useful and important collaborations.

Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies: The Department has already made preliminary changes, and has had advanced discussions, designed to improve the curriculum that will form the foundation of a stand-alone graduate program, which I fully support.

SIGNATURES

Dr. Heidi Northwood

November 9, 2024



APPROVAL DATES

Approved by Program Review Sub-Committee: November 20, 2024

Approved by Senate Academic Planning Committee: January 9, 2025

Submitted to Senate (for information): March 4, 2025

Implementation Report Due Date: March 4, 2027

RECOMMENDATIONS PRIORITIZED FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN

The following Implementation Plan was created by the Dean of Science and the Associate Vice-President and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies as part of the Decanal Response.

Recommendation to be Implemented	Responsibility for Implementation	Responsibility for Resourcing (if applicable)	Anticipated Completion Date	Additional Notes
Recommendation WLU1: If it has not done so already, the Department should complete these changes.	Department	N/A	Winter 2025	
Recommendation WLU2: That the project-based Master's program not be a direct-entry option for students but serve as an option for students struggling to complete the requirements of the research-based program.	Department	N/A	N/A	
Recommendation WLU3: Clearly differentiate research based from course based graduate programming.	Department	N/A	N/A	
Recommendation WLU4: That no guaranteed funding support be associated with the course-based Master's option.	Department	N/A	June 2025	
Recommendation WLU5: There should be a small set of graduate courses specific to the research-intensive degrees advancing research skills and competencies while also helping to build community amongst students in this program option. These courses could be delivered jointly to Master's and PhD students as long as there is a clearly articulated differences in expectations.	Department	N/A	June 2025	

<p>Recommendation WLU6: If not completed already, finalize review of all existing required and elective graduate courses with an eye to 1) eliminating all courses that have not been offered in some time, 2) offering a small suite of courses that a) focus on methodologies, b) meet the core and elective requirements of course based Master program(s), and c) offer generic seminar shells to deliver customized courses in cognate areas of the discipline (“Seminar in Human Geography”, Seminar in Physical Geography, ..., perhaps re-thought versions of the old 620, 640, 660, etc.).</p>	Department	N/A	June 2025	
<p>Recommendation WLU7: That these courses be viewed primarily as providing a foundation of geographic knowledge and advancing requisite critical thinking, but with expectations of evaluation components that demonstrate capacity for synthesis and independent thinking.</p>	Department	N/A	N/A	
<p>Recommendation WLU8: The generic seminar courses always carry an appropriate subtitle when offered to differentiate delivery from one year to the next.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	
<p>Recommendation WLU9: That WLU GES and UW GEM collaborate on ensuring mechanisms for graduate students to access each other’s graduate courses with minimal bureaucratic fuss or additional cost to the students.</p>	Department	N/A	June 2025	

<p>Recommendation WLU10: That there be documented clarity on guidelines, policies and procedures that will allow individual faculty members to serve on supervisory committees at the other institution, or act as external examiners, but likely not both.</p>	Department	N/A	June 2025	
<p>Recommendation WLU11: That a fast-track option be developed, enabling an intentional undergraduate to graduate program pathway.</p>	Department	N/A	June 2025	
<p>Recommendation WLU12: That joint senior undergraduate / graduate courses be encouraged as long as differences in expectation are clearly articulated.</p>	Department	N/A	Ongoing	
<p>Recommendation WLU13: That the Department develop a bi-weekly colloquium series jointly organized by faculty and graduate students (perhaps as part of delivery of the core required course focusing on developing research skills and building community) that attracts speaker of general interest covering contemporary topics and current research.</p>	Department	N/A	June 2025	
<p>Recommendation WLU14: That the Department consider organizing and delivering this jointly with GEM at UW perhaps by taking responsibility for alternative colloquium time slots.</p>	Department	N/A	June 2025	

<p>Recommendation WLU15: That such a colloquium series be considered as a forum not only to bring in invited guest speakers from the outside, but also allow junior faculty and PhDs close to completion to share their insights.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>June 2025</p>	
<p>Recommendation WLU16: That such a colloquium series include opportunity for socialization.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>June 2025</p>	
<p>Recommendation WLU17: Identify and resolve discrepancies between WLU FGPS policies and procedures and long-established practice in Geography with flexibility to grandparent practices where they make intuitive sense and appear to be working, otherwise asking WLU GES to change practices to align with institutional rules.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>June 2025</p>	
<p>Recommendation WLU18: That the Department collaborate with FGPS and WLU to develop recruitment strategies focusing especially on students from the North and rural areas.</p>	<p>Department Faculty of Science FGPS</p>	<p>Faculty of Science</p>	<p>June 2026</p>	
<p>Recommendation WLU19: That WLU and its Faculty of Science and FGPS recognize and celebrate the long tradition of graduate studies and research strength in its GES unit as flagships driving the new Strategic Plan, and invest in the</p>	<p>Department Faculty of Science Office of Research</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

unit to ensure that strategic faculty replacements and support staff are motivated and incentivized to build on this strength instead of seeing it erode.				
Recommendation WLU20: That in order to walk the talk of its Strategic Plan, WLU seek ways formally to recognize graduate student supervision as part of teaching load.	Department Faculty of Science Office of Provost WLUFA	Office of Provost	Ongoing	This is a complex issue that will require structural changes to implement (e.g., course load of programs, section sizes, modes of course delivery, etc.)
Recommendation WLU21: That preference be given to scholarship support for graduate students applying to work with junior faculty and mid-career faculty seeking to rejuvenate a stalled research program, with expectation that successful mid-career and senior scholars will subsequently find their own funds to support graduate students.	Department	N/A	Ongoing	
Recommendation WLU22: That efforts and resources be invested to explore non-conventional funding to support the research mission and allow faculty to building minimum and/or competitive graduate funding packages.	Department Faculty of Science Development Office	Faculty of Science Development Office	Ongoing	
Recommendation WLU23: That the Department review its own minimum funding policies for PhD	Department	N/A	June 2025	

and research-based Master students and strive to do its best to be more reflective of a “living wage”.				
Recommendation WLU24: That the Department team up across campus and possibly take a leadership role at Wilfrid Laurier University to explore funding opportunities for international students to offset their inabilities to draw on tri-council scholarships and selective provincial funds.	Department FGPS	N/A	Ongoing	Another complex issue to address
Recommendation WLU25: That the Department consult with graduate students and then review how it communicates with prospective and accepted graduate students to be as up-front and welcoming about graduate studies in the Department as well as living in Waterloo region.	Department	N/A	Ongoing	
Recommendation WLU26: That the Department review, in consultation with graduate students, how graduate student life and activities can be supported in a welcoming and constructive environment.	Department	N/A	Ongoing	
Recommendation WLU27: That the Department actively support mechanisms for the graduate students to communicate with each other, and that printing and display of posters announcing events organized by graduate students be welcome, encouraged and facilitated.	Department	N/A	Ongoing	

<p>Recommendation WLU28: We encourage that such a website / handbook be designed, preferably in close collaboration with the graduate students.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Recommendation WLU29: That the Department, with graduate student input, review existing teaching assistant training and onboarding efforts and revise or augment as judged appropriate in consultation with the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Recommendation WLU30: That attention be given to ensuring a safe, healthy and collegial working environment in the Department, and that expectations of staff and faculty remain reasonable and achievable without creating inequities or concern for wellness / health.</p>	<p>Department Faculty of Science</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	