

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

PROGRAM UNDER REVIEW

PROGRAM	SENATE APPROVAL DATE	PREPARED BY
Social Welfare and Social Development	May 10, 2024	Provost and Vice-President

A. SUMMARY OF REVIEW PROCESS & LISTING OF PROGRAMS UNDER REVIEW

SELF-STUDY REVIEW TIMELINE	DATE
1. Self-Study Presented to AQAPC	October 22, 2021
2. Site Visit Conducted	October 4 – 6, 2023
3. Reviewer’s Report Received	November 2, 2023
4. Internal Reviewers Response Received	December 5, 2023
5. Dean’s Response Received	February 12, 2024

The members of the review committee were:

- Dr. Jennifer Jarman, Lakehead University
- Dr. Tom Malleson, Western University

The academic programs offered by the Department which were examined as part of the review included:

Bachelor of Arts Major
Bachelor of Arts Honours Specialization

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on April 26, 2019.

B. PROGRAM STRENGTHS

The Social Welfare and Social Development program is doing a good job and clearly accomplishing its core mandate. The program is fundamentally working, and the faculty should be congratulated on their efforts. Although the faculty are overstretched and the trajectory of the numbers over the last few years is worrying, the program continues to be successful.

C. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

NOTE: COMMENTS BELOW ARE AS RECEIVED

External Reviewers Recommendation #1: The university (not the program) should improve its marketing of the program. A major source in the weakness of enrollment is due to the fact that the vast majority of students at Nipissing are unaware of what the program is or what it offers. Only one student reported that they had heard about the program through any formal advertising process (a faculty-led outreach at the college), but rather student after student reported accidentally finding out about its existence. Some students report only finding out about the program through googling. Since the program is not a traditional one, it is vital for the university to do a better job of informing students about it. In the same vein, the university should strive to do a better job of telling the story of the program to prospective high-school and college students, as most of the students appeared to be transferring in after first taking a first-year class.

Unit's Response: The reviewers' recommendation for better marketing the program reinforces our argument over time that the SWLF program appeals to domestic and international mature students and college graduates as well as high school graduates. Therefore, multiple ways of promoting the program are needed. While the program faculty have regularly visited Canadore classes on an annual basis to recruit students, the faculty has also made efforts to meet the marketing department whenever opportunity arises. We are glad that the marketing department is getting our message. We strongly agree with this recommendation and would like to suggest that this external reviewers' report is to be shared with the marketing department for them to introduce the program and answer questions about its distinct features.

For example, the external reviewers recognize the SWLF program's leading role in fulfilling NU's mission and strategic plan through its three important contributions. These are "the early development of a model for Indigenous education relevant to the needs of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, the early adoption of experiential learning and community-based curriculum options, and most recently the integration of hybrid teaching strategies to help accommodate students." Moreover, the reviewers acknowledge that "a central strength of the program is in its core offerings on public policy and political economy." They continue by saying that, "Indeed, this program is one of the few programs in the whole country with a rigorous focus on political-economy. This is a rarity, a real strength, and differentiates the Nipissing program from offerings of other Canadian universities."

Dean's Response: I agree with the ERC and IRC that an effective marketing and recruitment strategy is essential for any program, especial for the "non-traditional" programs. The Dean's office is committed to continue working with faculty, staff, students, and Marketing and Recruitment to develop a strategic enrollment plan for SWLF. The SWLF faculty met with the Recruitment team to tell them about the unique or innovative aspects of the program and provided them with some key talking points about the program. We need to develop an effective online marketing profile for all the A&S programs. The IRC response does not provide a clear description of the program, "public policy and political economy" is quite broad. How is this distinct from Gender Equality and Social Justice or Political Science? I think we need more data to determine why students are selecting other programs, such as social work, gender equality and social justice, or other programs.

Provost's Response: The ability to tell the story of all of our non-traditional programs in such a way as to capture of attention and interest of prospective students is urgent and important. I would agree that this is also true for traditional programs, as students may enter traditional programs with assumptions and expectations that have been cultivated in popular culture. The University is committed to working constructively with Marketing, Communications and Recruitment to ensure that both external and internal audiences understand the distinctive value of each of our programs. I want to amplify the Dean's response with respect to the potential confusion among and between SWLF and GESJ and Political Science insofar as each engages with public policy, political economy and power. How do we make the differences clear? Are the differences sufficient to maintain different degrees and program areas? Are there opportunities to make the differences starker and the points of alignment clearer and mutually supportive?

External Reviewers Recommendation #2: Given the overstretched nature of the faculty, we recommend that any merger not result in the loss of a course release for administrative duties. Creating a program coordinator position with a half release (as opposed to the current full release) might be a useful way to do this.

Unit's Response: The program faculty fully agrees with this recommendation and would like to point out that it took so much time and effort for the small program faculty to establish the above three identified distinct contributions without any administrative staff support. Going forward with these contributions will take much time and effort as well from the small program faculty because no other person who does not understand the program and knows about what is best for its future growth can do; and that includes the Dean's office or the Chair of the newly merged academic unit. A course release for the program coordinator is necessary and allows the faculty to maintain a level of research that helps with the program growth. For example, the program has recently taken much needed time and effort to build on the distinct contributions through curriculum changes and collaboration with other programs on new program initiatives. The active involvement of the program in the design and delivery of the post-bac on Health is an example of the latter. To further strengthen the program in areas of decolonization and Indigenous ways of knowing in line with NU's recent strategic plan is another example. Specifically, we have submitted four motions to the Academic Curriculum Committee for the following curriculum changes.

Firstly, SWLF students can either take SWLF Introduction or SOCI Introduction as a prerequisite for SOCI 2126 (Research Methods) to fulfill the requirements of SWLF program major, Specialization, and Honours Specialization as well as the collaborative program with Canadore's Social Service Workers. Secondly, SWLF students have more choices in taking either SOCI 2127 (Quantitative Research) or SOCI/ANTH 3036 (Qualitative Research) or INDG 2106 (Oral and Literary Storywork), as a required course. Thirdly, further changes are related to requiring SWLF students overall to take at least one out of three courses in Indigenous Studies, INDG 1006 (Madjitang: In the Beginning – An Introduction to Indigenous Studies), INDG 2006 (Indigenous Places – Changing Landscapes), and INDG 2906 (Indigenous Philosophy – Inaadiziwin: Thought) to learn Indigenous ways of knowing. For details, see the appendix I. These changes will allow the program to further expand the education of political economy from traditional epistemology and methodology limited to qualitative and quantitative research approaches to learning of critical right-based frameworks, including Indigenous, anti-racist, and feminist perspectives. This learning enables students to be further exposed to wholistic considerations and analysis from class-based, race-based to gender-based analysis and Indigenous ways of knowing.

Moreover, the two tenured program faculty both have established a long list of research agenda. Often, our research informs our teaching and program development. The above identified contributions of the program are telling examples of the directions of our research, which is community-oriented and is driven by our desire to build our commitment to a more equitable development of social welfare in Canada and the world through keeping pace with leading edge research in collaboration with both national and international networks. However, the faculty member who was the Chair of the program and is now the program coordinator sacrificed their research and will continue to experience compression of time and effort devoted to research. Ultimately the program will suffer when our research lags. A half course release for the coordinator will help maintain the healthy growth of this important and unique program.

Dean's Response: We are following the recently negotiated collective agreement that provides administrative release for the Chair of the academic unit. The Chair, with the support of the members of the academic units, can focus on curriculum reviews and program innovation, recruitment and retention initiatives, mentoring, and other academic initiatives. Programs with less than five (5) tenure-track faculty will not have the human resources to share the administrative responsibilities. One way to address this challenge is to merge faculty by creating a new program. For example, there are similarities between the Social Welfare and Social Development, and Gender Equality and Social Justice. A new program in Social Justice Studies or Social Development Studies would not cause much disruption to the students in the current program offerings. This would create a cluster of 6 tenure-track faculty, with the opportunity to share the administrative duties and expand the offerings within the program.

We are also shifting some of the administrative duties of chairs to staff positions. For example, the Manager of Quality Assurance and Program Innovation will be able to assist with the IQAP process and new program development, and the Registrar's office is providing data to help prepare the course master.

Provost's Response: I am pleased that faculty are engaged in robust discussions of administrative service in support of innovative programs, especially those with community placement and service learning. I encourage the Dean to

engage the faculty broadly on conversations that disambiguate faculty service and administrative support. It will be useful to ensure that the University's administrative support offices are aware and able to support programs and students in ways that match responsibilities and expertise with roles.

External Reviewers Recommendation #3: We recommend increasing program budget, perhaps to \$1000, so as to afford at least a few honoraria for guest speakers and other events to build the profile of the program.

Unit's Response: The IRC agrees with the reviewers who have called for the return of program-level budget resources adequate to support a guest speaker series, honoraria, etc. at least in the amount of \$1000. As David Borman commented, "This is important for the student experience, the vitality of student clubs within programmatic areas, and exposure of students to a diversity of approaches in programs with a small number of faculty." The SWLF program has had Elders and Knowledge Keepers speaking to SWLF classes. Moving forward, this tradition shall continue as it helps maintain the contributions of the program and carry through NU's strategic plan. Over the past years since 2018, the program was able to establish a guest speaker series with the support of a SSHRC PDG grant held by the Chair of the program. To maintain this guest speaker series will need the Dean to increase program-level budget to ideally \$1000 a year.

Dean's Response: The honoraria budget for Arts and Science is administered by the Dean's office. When the honorarium was at the program-level the funds were often not spent, and we had to transfer funds between departments. It is easier to administer the honorarium fund through the Dean's office. Also, I am not aware of ever declining an honorarium request by SWLF or any other program. The Dean's office has asked faculty for input on (re)introducing experiential learning and other appropriate opportunities for students that contribute to the degree-level learning expectations.

Provost's Response: As I read the Dean's response, all program areas are encouraged to make application for honoraria funds. Such a centralization of funding allows the University to ensure that all members of the University community could be invited to hear from guest speakers. This is maximally beneficially to the entire community.

External Reviewers Recommendation #4: Given that most instructors already seem to be offering hybrid delivery to create a flexible delivery model, we recommend making this official and using it as a selling feature.

Unit's Response: The program faculty agrees with this recommendation and would like to point out that the flexible delivery model taxes more faculty's time and effort to keep students learning online from drifting away from a fully devoted attention required for a successful completion of the course. More faculty's time and effort are needed to help students learning online gain ability and skills for academic achievements. The flexible model is more suited to mature students and college graduates who are already working in the community and social welfare sector and seek opportunities to advance their academic credentials. This point corresponds to our ongoing discussion with the NU's marketing department and the Dean's office about multiple ways of recruitment for the program.

Dean's Response: Prior to committing to a decision to offer a fully hybrid program, I would need more data on the financial and academic implications. What do you mean by hybrid – synchronous or asynchronous? How do you coordinate the placements in the second year? I support exploring the viability of the SWLF program and the implications of offering a hybrid mode of delivery.

Provost's Response: Like the Dean, I am unclear whether the Unit and Reviewers are speaking about hybrid or hyflex, synchronous or asynchronous. It is also unclear whether SWLF is using the learning management system to support a "flipped classroom," or has other ideas about pedagogical innovation. The self-study document did not make a proposal or reflect on the nature of prospective changes. I encourage the faculty to work with the Dean and Director of Teaching and Learning to formalize their vision of best practice in pedagogy for their cohort and document it for consideration by stakeholders including Senate. If there is a significant change in the mode of delivery that would also require that Quality Council approve the proposed change.

External Reviewers Recommendation #5: The program should consider offering summer courses to decrease time to graduation (taught by part-timers so as not to increase load on already overstretched full-timers).

Unit's Response: The program faculty agrees with this recommendation and would like to point out that two courses are planned for the spring/summer of 2024 in response to students' demand. While the LTA faculty has arranged for one of their six workload courses to be taught in the spring, the other offer is our most popular course on Addiction to be taught by the regular instructor of the course who is a part-timer. Going forward, we would ask the Dean to help us keep our planning to provide our students at least two courses in the spring and/or summer by increasing program level faculty resources.

Dean's Response: To my knowledge SWLF does offer courses in the spring/summer session. Each program has a part-time budget and can offer up to two (2) courses in the spring/summer term. Ideally the program will offer different courses each spring/summer so that students have alternatives each year. With low program enrollments, most of the students are taking the courses as electives.

Provost's Response: It is noted that SWLF is committed to teaching courses in the Spring/Summer and that there is (human and financial) capacity to support this initiative. Having said this, I am curious as to the ways in which electives are understood to contribute to SWLF and other programs (are these electives that can be used in support of other degree programs)? Is there a danger that by offering popular programs in the Spring/Summer that students will not take them in Fall/Winter? Are these courses cycled in meaningful ways over a temporal horizon of three years?

External Reviewers Recommendation #6: The library budget for this program is completely inadequate. This needs to be addressed whether through combining budget with other programs with similar needs, or a special fund-raising initiative.

Unit's Response: The IRC agrees with this recommendation and would engage in a conversation with the Dean and other programs of the newly merged academic unit on an idea of combining library budget.

Dean's Response: The library budget is not allocated by program, it is controlled by the Harris Learning Library Executive Director. The library acquisition budget is split between licensed and non-licensed acquisitions. Nearly 90% of the acquisition budget is allocated to maintaining licensed acquisitions (e.g. journals, database), with 10% for non-licensed acquisitions (e.g. books). The library acquisition budget has remained stagnant, while licenses acquisitions are increasing 4-8% annually. If there is a specific acquisition that SWLF is requesting, they should reach out the Harris Learning Library staff.

Provost's Response: I believe that the external reviewers are under a misapprehension that the program library acquisitions budget is \$500 (page 5). As the Dean rightly observes, the Library budget for acquisitions is not aggregated by program. Most importantly, according to the Executive Director of the Library, there have been no unmet requests for acquisitions in this program area. If there is an unmet need, this needs to be defined and a proposal formally initiated in order that the Library can assess the request.

External Reviewers Recommendation #7: If possible, the program should consider adding an additional course or two on "alternative political-economic systems" and "workers' rights and economic justice," as requested by the students. Presumably these course topics could be tied to the requirements for the replacement tenure track hire.

Unit's Response: The program faculty fully agrees with this recommendation and has submitted two new position applications to the Dean's office: one for a tenure-track and another for a LTA1 renewal. The external reviewers are impressed at the amount of work done by a small number of SWLF faculty and have only good things to say about the students in the program they met. As they urge the university to adequately fund and support the program, the program faculty would encourage the Dean and the Provost to act on the reviewers' recommendation and take our applications very seriously and holistically together with NU's long-term growth and competitive advantage in the north. The new position applications we have submitted will specialize in population health, care work and

employment, public policy and social services, Indigenous models of social economy, etc. in support of NU's strategic plan and relationship with northern Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. This new position will help put reviewers' recommendation into action by offering at least a course on Care Work and Labour Rights and/or Caregivers and Family Security. It will also help sustain the SWLF program by teaching required courses of SWLF 1006 (Introduction), 3006 (History of Social Welfare) and SWLF 3007 (Social and Economic Justice) and other elective courses such as SWLF 3146 (Work), SWLF 3806 (Family Violence) and 3166 (Housing and Homelessness) as well as SWLF 3456 (Disability and Social Welfare), nearly all which are unique at NU. We hope that this new position will help strengthen the SWLF program's ongoing collaboration with Child and Family Studies and Social Work, and build new synergies with Economics, Philosophy, and Political Science, among others. For details, see appendix II.

Dean's Response: I do not have enough information to support the ERC and IRC recommendation to add courses on "alternative economic systems" and "workers' rights and economic justice". Will these courses replace the existing course "Social and Economic Justice"? A program curriculum review would help to develop the rationale why those two courses are required. The curriculum review and mapping exercise will help to develop a marketing and recruitment strategy; it could also lead to a new program initiative with faculty from other programs with a similar focus.

Provost's Response: In response to Recommendation #7, the Dean encourages a review of the curricular map in order to establish gaps or areas of opportunity (as well as possible redundancies). This seems a practical response to the external reviewers' recommendation which is oddly granular and at the level of a course. Which the Unit takes this recommendation as an opportunity to define a new position, there is a process for requesting new positions and the rationale would speak to curricular needs and be rooted in the curricular map.

External Reviewers Recommendation #8: Given the high productivity and stretched nature of this unit at this point in time, the University needs to protect its employees with adequate Health and Wellness support and guidance regarding healthy work life balance to combat work-related stress and burnout.

Unit's Response: The IRC agrees with this recommendation and would like to point out that the program is able to grow because the small program faculty have placed the goals of the program and its growth at the centre of their own growth. Such dedication at the cost of an imbalance among the small faculty between work and life and a sacrifice of our research will ultimately lead to the program and training of our students receiving decreasing quality hours and education. We like to encourage the Dean and the Provost to seriously incorporate the previous recommendations on increasing program support and the support of new faculty positions. We also hope that some of the discussions of the ongoing academic and operational planning that are related to the concerns of this recommendation will be carried through to benefit the SWLF program as well as every faculty and staff across the university.

Dean's Response: I support the ERC recommendation to assess the viability of SWLF by considering not only the financial capacity, but human capacity. Offering a community placement experience in second year contributes to the complexity and burnout of faculty. As mentioned above, there are faculty in other programs that have a similar focus on social development and social justice. These two programs could be merged without faculty having to change their teaching or research focus. It is a challenge to deliver an Honours Specialization with two tenured faculty members. The Dean's office will work with the faculty, the Registrar and Manager of Quality Assurance and Program Innovation to consider alternative program designs.

Provost's Response: I direct all faculty to the University's Employee Assistance Program which provides confidential and voluntary consultation, counselling and worklife services that are available twenty-four (24) hours a day in-person, by telephone and online. As well, the Human Resources department continues to sponsor Health and Wellness activities. It is vital that the University's faculty, staff and students develop and encourage healthy patterns of self-care, this is our best path to long term sustainability.

External Reviewers Recommendation #9: The contributions of the LTA were highly praised by administrators, colleagues and particularly students, but given the shortfall of administrative resources for this unit, they appear to be taking on many administrative tasks to help keep the program afloat, but which do not provide the career development necessary for a future tenure-track competition. This appears to be a classic career

trap. The institution should protect a PhD scholar of this calibre and energy and provide appropriate mentorship and support to make sure that they are provided with appropriate career development that enable an LTA to transition up the next rung of a successful academic career. Consideration should be given to alternate ways of organizing and redistributing the extra administrative tasks that the LTA is taking on, possibly by drawing in staff or faculty members from related units. If the existing position is converted to tenure-track, it might be possible to build in a research release to allow the existing LTA to phase back more fully into research and publication as would be necessary for a successful tenure run.

Unit's Response: The IRC highly agrees with the reviewers' recommendation and would like to urge the Dean and the Provost to take our recent new position applications very seriously because both applications are related to recognition of the contributions of the current LTA. With a new tenure-track position the current LTA will be able to phase back more fully into research and publication for a successful tenure run. With a reduced teaching load of a new tenure-track, the program needs a new LTA to help teach both SWLF core as well as elective courses to enable our students to move from start to finish in their desired timeline.

Dean's Response: I received the position requests from SWLF. The position requests are ranked within Arts and Science based on enrollment, alignment with strategic plan, financial viability, among other criteria. The position requests from both Faculties are ranked again, based on similar criteria. All position requests are subject to Board approval.

The collective agreement does not require an LTA to participate in service; I do not expect an LTA to participate in service. They are invited to attend Department meetings and participate in decision-making, as outlined in the collective agreement. It is important for LTA faculty to maintain their focus on teaching.

Provost's Response: The University appreciates and recognizes the contributions of individuals. The process of Quality Assurance focuses instead on systemic or structural considerations for a program. Recommendation #9 speaks to a general concern for contract faculty.

External Reviewers Recommendation #10: Explore the program's retention and 4th year completion rates for identification and resolution of any barriers that are affecting students moving from start to finish of this important program.

Unit's Response: The program faculty agrees with this recommendation and would like to add that Dean and Provost's commitment to the fulfilment of the above recommendation on new SWLF positions will help maintain a healthy list of courses sufficient for our students to choose from to complete their degree in SWLF. Moreover, the program faculty has also started to work with the Dean's office as well as the office of academic advising on SWLF students' enrolment, retention, and their possible course choices to follow more closely with where our students are with respect to their academic advancement. We hope to develop a strategy as we learn more from this data with the help of the Dean's office and other offices.

Dean's Response: I agree with the ERC and IRC recommendation to conduct a performance review to determine the barriers and retention issues within the program. Nipissing University will be introducing an annual program performance review to identify recruitment, retention, and other challenges. We need to differentiate SWLF from similar programs at Nipissing or create a new degree programs. Faculty from existing programs can assemble the interdisciplinary programs when existing program enrollments decline. Faculty can switch focus to something else without causing too much disruption to students and the university.

Provost's Response: Recommendation #10 is the highest priority concern highlighted by the external reviewers. It is critical that SWLF working with the Dean define what the barriers are to successful completion of the degree and work to meaningfully address those barriers in order that enrolment and viability are not jeopardized.

External Reviewers Recommendation #11: If possible, faculty might consider helping students form a Social Welfare Student Group. This could be useful in further building the sense of identity and community of the

program, which in turn can be useful in recruiting. Having a group also allows the students a voice to mobilize their concerns.

Unit's Response: The IRC fully agrees with this recommendation and would like to urge the Dean to increase the program level budget to enable our assistance with students' activities. Previously, there was a Social Welfare Student Club that engaged in community service activities including guest speaker sessions and winter cloths drive for the homelessness in North Bay. Current students are motivated to revive the Club as some of them work to mobilize around issues of great concern to students, including mature students to improve students' work and life at NU overall.

Dean's Response: I agree with the ERC recommendation that faculty help the students organize a student group. Student groups can seek membership status by applying to the Nipissing University Student Union. This will provide some funding for the student group. Alternatively, the faculty and students could initiate a theme-based student group (e.g. social activism) that might draw like interested students from similar programs.

Provost's Response: I have no concerns about this recommendation.

External Reviewers Recommendation #12: In terms of mergers, see the previous section. Overall, we do not see an obvious advantage in merging this program with others in the short term. We recommend that the program maintain its independence. However, if over the medium term a decline in numbers makes the program unsustainable, a merger might become unavoidable. In that case, the entire program will have to be re-thought. It is hard to speculate on the direction that should take, but it should be the creation of something new, not simply an amalgamation of existing programs. One possibility might be a return to the School of Social Work, another possibility might be some sort of PPE department, and another possibility might be a department of Social Justice. Those decisions should be guided in part by visions of exciting course content and also by interpersonal relationships (there is no point in merging programs if people cannot work together well).

Unit's Response: The IRC agrees with this recommendation and would like to provide an update on the recent development of merger with PPE. To begin, we note that reviewers' recommendation is for SWLF to serve as a "hub" for a reorganized department of coming together with PPE and/or SW and Child and Family Studies. We did meet with the faculty of the component programs of PPE and accepted that Dr. David Borman of Philosophy, the Chair of PPE, to continue as the Chair of PPE and SWLF until next June, at which point the academic unit of PPE and SWLF will elect a new chair. We also agreed with the proposed motion "that it is the policy of the Department of Political Science, Philosophy, Economics, and Social Welfare and Social Development that each constituent program has independent authority to approve curriculum changes affecting only that program." This motion proposal was based on the previous PPE practice.

With respect to possible synergies between SWLF and the component programs of the PPE, Dr. David Borman's response is perhaps representative. He wrote that, "The reviewers note student interest in 'alternative model' courses dealing with workers' rights and economic justice. This is an area in which Philosophy does indeed have interest in potential collaboration. Philosophical interest in workers' rights and economic justice concerns the truth/acceptability of arguments." (For details, see appendix III. for the full comments.) It will take time for the two component programs to build collaboration on such common interests and possibly others that we can identify in future discussions. We hope that our application for a new position with an intention for it to help strengthen ongoing collaboration with Child and Family Studies and Social Work and build new synergy with Economics, Philosophy, and Political Science, at least on the courses about the above "alternative model" will help move forward with the discussions. Possible synergies may be extended to overcoming challenges to managing and maintaining community connections due to Loss of course release for Department Chair in SWLF. It will take time, though, for different programs that are dissimilar in their operations, for example, no one in PPE has ever spoken about SWLF, in events of open house, etc, to develop a mutual understanding and articulation of each other programs. Overall, nevertheless, the Dean and the Provost will be the ones to help move the first step towards such collaboration by adding a new SWLF faculty position who is specialized in areas of care work, labour rights, and economic justice.

Anyhow, the coming together with PPE will not by any means prevent SWLF from collaborating with Child and Family Studies and Social Work. Discussions with these programs are ongoing on closer collaborations. It is however too soon

to determine the directions of these collaborations without the Dean and the Provost’s support for bringing a new SWLF faculty position on board.

Dean’s Response: I agree with the ERC recommendation that if enrollments decline to the level that the program is not viable, a new program would be the best alternative. Faculty in programs with low enrollments can assemble new innovative programs with little disruption to students, staff, faculty, and the university. The ERC offer a few suggestions, joining a PPE program or School of Social Work, or creating a new Social Justice program. There are synergies between the Social Welfare and Social Development and Gender Equality and Social Justice programs. The Dean’s office is committed to working with the faculty members, the Registrar, and Manager of Quality Assurance and Program Innovation to consider alternatives programs. I disagree with the ERC suggestion that if there are interpersonal relationship among faculty members there is no point in merging programs. We expect that everyone follows with the Respectful Workplace and Learning Environments Policy and that everyone consider the best interests of the students, the university and wider community in our decisions.

Provost’s Response: Recommendation #12 highlights the challenges for program renewal and innovation, especially as the goal is to innovate with minimal disruption, if possible. It seems that SWLF has many options for defining affinities, collaborations, and partnerships. I look forward to those conversations as led by the Dean and supported by the Manager of Quality Assurance and Program Innovation.

D. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PROVOST

Below are the recommendations that require specific action as a result of the Review, along with the identification of the position or unit responsible for the action in question. Notwithstanding the position or unit identified as the being responsible for specific recommendations, the Dean of the Faculty has the overall responsibility for ensuring that the recommended actions are undertaken

RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE MEMBER/UNIT	PROJECTED COMPLETION
#10: understand and eliminate barriers to successful degree completion	SWLF faculty, Registrar	September 1, 2024
#1: marketing	SWLF, Dean, Marketing and Recruitment	September 1, 2024
#4: hybrid delivery. This recommendation is unclear. If there is a case to be made for rethinking delivery, then it needs to be delineated. Were the delivery mode to significantly modify the program, then a major modification would need to be proposed to the QC.	SWLF, Director of Teaching and Learning	October 15, 2024

E. CONFIDENTIAL COMMENTS

(This is an optional area that can be used to discuss confidential matters that need to be addressed. This section will be removed when posting the Final Assessment Report on the Quality Assurance Website)