

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
EXTERNAL EXAMINERS' FINAL REPORT
INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE PROGRAM
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**

Examiners:

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DRAFT FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

This external review was a scheduled program review as per Article 5 of the Procedure for Academic Program Reviews. However, the reviewers felt this was an exceptional review given that the program had been suspended and were not accepting any new enrolments. Two of the reviewers were not aware of this situation prior to the commencement of the review on-site. The self-study did not provide details about the suspension of the program, nor did the letter of invitation to the reviewers. Given the specific challenges with the program, the review and interactions with individuals tended to focus on a redesign and/or rebranding of the program. As such, some of the standard components of a program review were not emphasized (i.e., curriculum review and exploration of specific courses, review of faculty, etc.).

At the time of the review, the program was severely under-resourced with only one full-time professor, one full-time CUPE staff and a half-time administrative staff (PEA). It was difficult to ascertain how many students are left from previous cohorts to graduate and who is supervising these students. We know the program has this specific information, however it was not part of the information provided. It appears that the remaining staff are responsible for ensuring the remaining students graduate from the program.

Rather than focus on issues related to the two faculty members leaving and attempting to review the program in the last few years, this review will focus on some of the strengths of the IGov program in support of a suggested rebranding/redesign exercise, as well as, some wise practices or lessons not to repeat.

The following are recommendations with respect to a suggested rebranding and/or redesign of the IGov program:

1. Appropriate resources, including adequate academic and non-academic staff must be provided to the program. Of course, this will depend on the outcome of the redesign and should follow the policies and procedures of the University.
2. The current staff, particularly the faculty member, Dr. Mucina remains in a very precarious position given the suspension of the program. There appears to be significant reputational issues related to the IGov Program, and this needs to be addressed ensuring the integrity of current staff and the community relationships.

3. From what the external examiners gathered, it appears that the IGov program was very depended on one or two faculty members over the past two decades. While this continuity can be a strength, it would be a wise practice to ensure that a redesigning of the program does not depend on one or even two academic faculty over such an extended period of time. A program should exist and not be so intricately tied to one or two people.
4. It appeared that senior administration might have a potential plan for the redesign to imbed IGov within Indigenous Nationhood, particularly given that the most recent applicants to the program were asked to consider completing a degree in Indigenous Nationhood. Imbedding the program in Indigenous Nationhood did not appear to be something that was wanted by people involved in the IGov program (staff and students). We understand that one of the academic faculty involved in the IGov program has been transferred to Indigenous Nationhood. This review is not exploring the merit of the two faculty who have left the program, although the University should consider the merit and options available of moving the program into another program. If this is done, however, perhaps IGov will lack its individual focus by becoming subsumed in Indigenous Nationhood. The redesign committee should therefore consider how to ensure the integrity of IGov if this is done, or simply let the redesign go and focus on developing a strong Indigenous Nationhood program.
5. Due to the reputational issues of IGov, it may be worthwhile to consider changing the name of the program, as well as the focus of the curriculum. As noted in the memorandum by the Dean of Graduate Studies, the redesign committee along with community members might consider this naming and curriculum focus. A possible name - C'ela'nen School of Indigenous Resurgence – was mentioned by some participants of the review.
6. With respect to potential curriculum focus, while the reviewers did not look extensively at the past curriculum, it is suggested that Indigenous female and/or two-spirit leadership and scholarship was lacking within the existing program. In addition, while this review avoided discussing the issue about one previous faculty member who has since resigned, some of what occurred is well documented and easily found in the media with a public statement concerning this faculty member. Given the systemic issues related to misogyny and patriarchy that are implicated and deeply imbedded in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, 2-Spirit and Trans (MMIWG2ST), the rebranded or imbedding the program in Indigenous Nationhood should ensure that this topic be included. There is an opportunity for University of Victoria to show leadership both nationally and internationally and a focused effort of the rebranding committee should not shy away from this topic.

7. The doctoral program by special arrangement appears to have been a strength of the program; however, even though it was noted in the previous program review in 2011, that formalizing the doctoral program should be explored, this was not done. The doctoral program appears to be administered only by special arrangement. The reviewers were unable to assess the curriculum of the doctoral program but understand that the course work, at least for some students, consisted of all directed readings. Depending on how this is designed, it could significantly limit the students learning, particularly given the low numbers of faculty affiliated with the program. Having said that, from an Indigenous knowledges' perspective, directed readings might be ideal to allow the students to explore Indigenous theory and practice from a community standpoint. Albeit, an Indigenous specific program could design phenomenal doctoral level courses that provide more direction for student learning.
8. The external reviewers were unable to assess the quality of relationship with community. Perhaps this was a result of the suspended program, lack of having meetings with community as part of the assessment, or a combination of both. The reviewers had a sense that the reputational issues with the program may also be an issue with community partnerships. Having said that, in the redesign, community should be first and foremost.