Second Cycle of the MPHEC's
Quality Assurance Monitoring Process:

Assessment of
Saint Mary's University's
Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

Final Report

Prepared by

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

A. Overall purpose of the 2nd Cycle of Quality Assurance Monitoring Process

Universities are responsible for ensuring the ongoing quality of the programs and services they provide to students. This is largely accomplished through cyclical internal and external reviews managed independently by each university. The MPHEC's primary role is to confirm that such reviews are taking place and to validate the extent to which institutional quality assurance (QA) frameworks meet agreed-upon regional standards, while at the same time providing advice and assistance to institutions. The 2nd cycle of the Quality Assurance Monitoring (QAM) process is intended to serve that purpose, and builds on the MPHEC's "first cycle" of the QAM process, which was carried out between 2001 and 2009.

The QAM process aims to answer the following questions:
1. What progress have institutions made since the "first cycle"?
2. To what extent are institutions following their own QA framework?
3. To what extent are institutions' QA frameworks aligned with the MPHEC's 2016 Guidelines for Maritime Universities' Quality Assurance Frameworks?

B. Description of the Monitoring Process with Saint Mary's University

At the request of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), the Review Panel was asked to carry out the QAM review of Saint Mary's University's (SMU) quality assurance framework. The members of the Review Panel were:
1. **Dr. Neil Besner** – He is the former Provost and Vice-President, Academic, University of Winnipeg. He has assessed Canadian universities and colleges and their programs in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta; he was a member of Campus Alberta Quality Council from 2014-2016, and since 2018 has been a member of the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.
2. **Dr. Elizabeth Halford** – She has worked in United Kingdom higher education since 1993, as a research active academic and in senior leadership roles. She was Head of Validation and Review (2008 – 2012) at the University of West London and Head of Research and Intelligence at the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2012-2016). She is now an independent higher education consultant and a Principal Adviser for Wells Advisory UK.

The QAM Process at SMU included the following steps:
1. An institutional progress report prepared by SMU (February 2020);
2. An analysis of all pertinent documentation by the Review Panel (March 2020);
3. A virtual[1] site visit (see agenda under Appendix C) (May 20-21, 2020);
4. A draft report prepared by the Review Panel to SMU to validate factual information and correct any errors (July 2020);
5. Validation of draft report by SMU (August 2020);

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[1] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the site visit was carried out virtually.

6. A final report incorporating SMU's comments to SMU (August 2020);
7. A follow-up action plan (see Appendix A) prepared by SMU (November 2020; revised February 2022);
8. Recommendation by the joint Association of Atlantic Universities and MPHEC Quality Assurance Committee to approve final report and follow-up action plan and subsequent approval by the MPHEC board (April 2022);
9. The Review Panel report, with the action plan from SMU appended, posted (in the language of the institution) on the MPHEC and SMU's website (April 2022); and,
10. A follow-up report to be submitted by SMU to the MPHEC one year following Commission approval of the Review Panel report. The follow-up report will outline how SMU has addressed the actions it had identified in its follow-up action plan.

SECTION II: ASSESSMENT OF SAINT MARY'S UNIVERSITY'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND UNITS

A. Progress since the 1st cycle

The 1st cycle review of Saint Mary's University took place in 2008 and the report made six recommendations:

1. **Undertake regular reviews to establish a culture of quality assurance:** As outlined in SMU's "Institutional Quality Assurance Report for 2nd Cycle of the Quality Assurance Monitoring Process" of February 2020, the last twelve years since the 2008 Review have seen SMU establish a cycle of regular reviews of all of its Programs that calls for each Program to be reviewed every seven years, with reviews followed up after three years. This review schedule runs from 2017 through 2025. The most current articulation of these reviews' schedules is to be found in SMU's "Senate Policy on the Review of Programs," of November 2019.

2. **Distribute responsibilities for quality assurance more broadly:** The appointment of a Manager, Program Reviews in October 2018 and of a Director of Institutional Analysis and Planning has facilitated a broader distribution and more explicit definition of responsibilities throughout all sectors at SMU, from Department members through to Chairs, External Reviewers, and Deans – whose roles in the review process have been enlarged, following the 2008 First Cycle recommendation – to Academic Planning and Senate.

3. **Strengthen the lines of accountability:** The new additions to the review process of requirements such as an Action Plan; a one-year report to the Academic Planning Committee and to Senate; and a new Three-Year Report (commencing in 2020) for programs starting their review process in 2020, among several other related similar measures, have strengthened accountability and its measurement at SMU.

4. **Make the policy more student centred:** Explicit plans for including student voices and feedback in the review process are underway, including a new requirement that

documented feedback from students be included as a component of the self-study, and featured as well as a "key consideration" in the process of continuous improvement.

5. **Clarify the process through enhanced documentation:** New or revised documentation, and easier access to same, is evident in the simplified self-study Template; in the new provision of generic terms of reference, both for External Reviewers and for SMU Chairs; and in the new requirement that monthly reports be submitted to APC of any Quality Assurance initiatives.

6. **Shorten the review cycle/improve timing:** As outlined below, all established programs must now be reviewed on a seven-year cycle, and new programs must be reviewed after five years.

In summary, the reviewers consider that the following key developments have led to creating a culture and community around quality assurance and program enhancement, specific examples of which are:

a) The establishment of a Manager, Program Review and support staff who work closely with faculty, deans, chairs, self-study committees, and other institutional stakeholders to facilitate the quality assurance process at SMU.

b) The development of standardized self-study templates that foster the concept of critical program analysis including the alignment of program level outcomes to SMU's Academic Plan and Strategic Priorities.

c) The establishment of a Program Review Committee that is tasked with the iterative evaluation and revisions (when necessary) of SMU's program review policy.

d) The enhancement of program review orientation sessions and formative workshops for programs throughout the program review process.

The above recommendations of the 2008 MPHEC report, together with the self-study document compiled by SMU, provided a starting point for the organisation of the review in May 2020 and informed the lines of enquiry investigated.

The review began on Wednesday morning, May 20 with a presentation from the President of SMU (Dr Robert Summerby-Murray), which was very useful as he provided a brief outline of the Strategic Plan for 2017-2022. The President remarked that the development of a strategic planning process, in consultation with faculty and support staff, is in itself a new initiative at SMU, instituted since the previous review. The strategic plan articulates a clear vision, mission, values and strategic initiatives, namely:

Strategic Initiative 1 Discovery and Innovation in a Learning-Centred Environment
Strategic Initiative 2 Intercultural Learning
Strategic Initiative 3 Institutional Sustainability

The two reviewers used these three strategic initiatives to inform their analysis of documents in advance of the virtual site visit and to provide a framework for questions and discussions, with the intention of testing how the policies and procedures at SMU support the achievement of the above initiatives.

As the review took place during the Covid-19 global pandemic, it was also considered necessary to investigate whether the decision-making processes, and management and governance procedures, enabled the institution to respond promptly and effectively to the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic, both to safeguard the student experience and to ensure business continuity. A commentary in respect of the institutional responses to the pandemic will be included towards the end of this report; it is worth noting at the outset, however, that the success of the reviewers' two-day virtual site visit, which included online meetings with a broad selection of faculty, students, and several levels of administration, testified to Saint Mary's clear readiness to adapt to the unique circumstances and to the institution's admirable efficiency in doing so.

The command of logistics and the execution of considerable technological expertise were both very much in evidence throughout the process, and we would like to commend the superb work of the organizers at Saint Mary's, led by William Kay. It is particularly noteworthy that the organizers at Saint Mary's selected the participants from SMU and arranged for 13 meetings over the two days; assembled 34 individuals, all of them working separately from their homes, into their respective panels; and coordinated participants working from three time zones (the U.K., Halifax time, and Toronto time). Remarkably, every individual arrived on time in the Zoom "waiting room" to join their meetings; and over the course of the two days there were, happily, no technological or logistical glitches. We are grateful for this extraordinary level of expertise, efficiency, and engagement, both from SMU and from the MPHEC – and all of this seamlessly via Zoom.

In general, the reviewers consider that SMU is an institution with a clear sense of identity and mission, which is evident in the curriculum and the attitudes of all stakeholders met by the reviewers. These SMU participants included representatives from senior management, including several levels of senior administration; longstanding executive assistants with significant institutional memory; a panel of students from several academic areas (i.e. Applied Sciences, Arts, and Economics), including a representative from SMUSA; chairs or heads of academic programs and departments that had recently undergone a Cyclical Review; faculty members from different academic areas (i.e., Business, Science, and Arts); and Directors from academic support units such as the Library and Student Affairs & Services. The reviewers noted that panelists included both members recently arrived at SMU as well as those with decades of service at SMU; this helpful diversity provided a nuanced overview of the institution.

Since the last review in 2008, it is apparent to the reviewers that the University has made significant progress towards establishing a more centralised, systematic and timely approach to quality assurance and program review. In particular, this new approach has been ably supported through a restructuring of senior management responsibilities for academic matters, research, enrolment management, analysis and planning, facilitated by the designation of redistributed responsibilities among the three positions below. Enrolment Management has now been included in the responsibilities of the AVP, while the Director's position constitutes a new appointment:

- Vice President Academic and Research
- Associate Vice President Academic and Enrolment Management
- Director of Institutional Analysis and Planning

It is also essential to note the positive impact of a new appointment to the post of Manager, Program Reviews. The support and constructive influence provided by this post-holder was commented upon frequently by managers and faculty throughout the site visit. It is also significant to note that the reduction of the review cycle to seven years, as well as the introduction of a three-year review in the follow-up process, conducted by the Academic Planning Committee (APC), has contributed to shortening the cycle and improving the timing of program review at SMU, in line with the recommendation of the previous MPHEC review in 2008. However, the reviewers understand these positive steps towards continuous improvement as constituting a work in progress. There are aspects of the quality assurance policies and procedures which would continue to benefit from further development. The specific aspects of this development will be commented upon later in this report, and in the recommendations made for future action.

B. Implementation of SMU's Policies and Procedures for Assessing Academic Programs and Units

In advance of the virtual site visit, the reviewers conducted an analysis of the documentation regarding institutional policies and practices, provided by SMU. The most significant of these (in relation to this review) were the Strategic Plan 2017-2022 the Academic Plan 2012-2017, and the Senate Policy on Review of Programs 2014, revised 2019. The Program Review Policy states that:

'Program review is a process of internal, formative self-evaluation combined with and guided by peer review'

In respect of the scheduling of program review, the Policy specifies that:

- *Each program will normally be reviewed once in every seven-year cycle.*
- *All new programs will normally be reviewed after five years and subsequently added to the review schedule.*
- *Programs subject to accreditation should follow the Guidelines for Program Review Subject to Accreditation.*
- *Notwithstanding the normal seven-year cycle, reviews may be scheduled at other times to accommodate accreditation review timelines, to allow for thematically similar programs to be reviewed simultaneously (e.g., independent minors, minors outside of a department, or freestanding minors), or to facilitate the timely discussion of significant issues in the discipline and/or program.*

The revised scheduling of program reviews on a seven-year cycle represents an important change in policy since the previous review, when the requirement for program reviews was at least one every ten years. This change to a seven-year cycle addressed, to an extent, one of the recommendations of the 2008 report, although that recommendation was ideally for a five-year cycle, to promote continuous quality improvement. Though a seven-year cycle is in line with the MPHEC Guidelines.

In relation to program review, the Senate Policy clarifies the term as follows:

'*the term "program review" is used in the broadest sense. It could refer to a review of programs in an entire Faculty (e.g., BSc, BA, BComm); some or all programs in a given Department or academic unit (e.g., Majors, minors, certificates); or a specific interdisciplinary program*'

The SMU process of program review

The Senate Policy on Program Review sets out the necessary steps to be followed when a program is reviewed; summarised as follows:

- A letter of notification is issued by the Chair of the Academic Planning Committee (APC);
- A self-study committee is established, with a chair;
- A self-study report is compiled by the committee;
- A report on the self-study report is prepared by the relevant Dean;
- A program review committee is convened, to include external representation (two members with relevant subject expertise);
- An onsite review is conducted by the two external reviewers;
- A report is submitted to the office of the VP Academic and Research;
- The program drafts a response to the report;

- The Dean drafts a response to the report;
- The report and responses are submitted to the APC;
- APC produces a report with recommendations and timelines for submission to Senate;
- Senate's consideration of the report results in a Senate report, including recommendations and actions to be taken by the department;
- An action plan is developed by the program, for submission to APC within 60 days of receiving the Senate report;
- A one-year report is submitted to APC outlining progress made in respect of the action plan, with subsequent reporting for consideration by Senate; and
- A three-year report is submitted to APC outlining progress made in respect of the action plan, with subsequent reporting for consideration by Senate.

Audit of the program review process

The reviewers selected four program reviews as an illustrative sample for scrutiny. To ensure that this sample represented the range and breadth of programs at SMU, the selection included different disciplines at undergraduate and graduate level, and reviews conducted over a period of time by different departments/faculties. The sample of dossiers comprised:

- Management
- Economics
- Master of Science in Applied Sciences
- Classics and Modern Languages

Commentary on dossiers reviewed:

For each of the dossiers submitted, Brightspace had been used effectively as a digital repository for documents, which facilitated the program review process, in line with the Senate policy.

Management

This program is a major within the Bachelor of Commerce degree, the main undergraduate program of the Sobey Business School. The latest review of this program took place in 2017-2018, commencing with the Self-study in July 2017 and progressing through the required stages of the review process in accordance with the Senate policy, with an external visit in November 2017, a report to Senate in April 2018, an Action Plan in June 2018 and a one-year follow-up in April 2019. It can be concluded, therefore, that the appropriate SMU policy and procedure was adhered to in this instance. The two external reviewers attended a program review committee meeting and their comments were aimed at supporting the SMU mission and academic plan, and assisting the University in offering high quality programs that respond to student needs, societal priorities and the public good. To this end, a number of constructive comments and recommendations were

made regarding the content of the program and how information is provided to students, to inform choice.

It was noted that student satisfaction with the program was high; however, there was a lack of distinct positioning with some confusion as to how the program differed from a General Business Major. Consequently, it was recommended that the possibility of adapting the major be actively explored, with a view to becoming more future-focused with an emphasis on experiential or work-integrative learning. The external reviewers also commented that the remit of this program review to focus solely on the Management major, rather than include its relationship with other majors in the BComm degree, or indeed the BComm itself, hampered their role to some extent. (see definition of the term 'program review' from SMU's Senate Policy on page 6 of this report).

The reports of the APC and Senate show that due consideration was given to the recommendations arising from program review, and that a department sub-committee was struck to take these forward, where appropriate. Subsequent action planning and follow-up reporting evince that appropriate developments and market research of competitor institutions has taken place, or in some instances, that actions were not needed, for stated reasons.

Economics

This program is also a major within the Bachelor of Commerce degree, the main undergraduate program of the Sobey Business School. The latest review took place in 2016-2017, commencing with the Self-study in March 2016 and progressing through the required stages of the review process in accordance with the Senate policy, with an external visit in December 2016, a report to Senate in April 2017, an Action Plan in August 2017 and a one-year follow-up in April 2018. It can be concluded therefore that the appropriate SMU policy and procedure was adhered to in this instance.

The two external reviewers provided a detailed and thoughtful report, following the visit to SMU and confirmed that the Economics program at SMU is comparable in quality to those offered at similar institutions in Canada, acknowledging the challenges and constraints imposed upon course offerings and diversity by low enrolments and limited number of faculty. A number of recommendations and constructive suggestions were made, intended to make the program more attractive to students. The department is encouraged to consider developing the technical skills of graduates by reviewing the mathematical prerequisites for the program and to systematically use calculus in all advanced courses. The reviewers also cite the desire of students and faculty to have more opportunities to enhance writing skills and greater use of the Writing Centre is recommended. It was also suggested that Business Analytics be included within the Economics curriculum and that the visibility of the program be increased by participating in the Arts Open House.

The subsequent responses of the program and Dean, together with the report to Senate, action planning and follow-up provide evidence of consideration of the recommendations and suggestions of the external reviewers. In some cases, it was decided not to pursue the suggestions, for stated reasons, but the department expressed understanding of why they had been made and recognise that future faculty appointments and succession planning will bring new knowledge and expertise to the curriculum. The follow-up shows that the Academic Calendar has been amended regarding changes to requirements, and in our discussions with faculty during the site visit, it was pleasing to note that the introduction of a Machine Learning element of the program has occurred, in response to the comments about the desirability of business analytics in the curriculum, made in the program review.

<u>Master of Science in Applied Sciences</u>

This program was approved by Senate in 2000-2001, and by MPHEC in April 2001; the first students were admitted in the 2001-2002 academic year, and the program was last reviewed in 2009. This recent review was conducted in 2017-2018, and followed the steps identified above in the "SMU process of Program Review." The unit's Self-Study was undertaken at the end of February 2018, identifying the multidisciplinary nature of the MSc in Applied Sciences as clearly fulfilling SMU's vision of diversity; 11 different programs contribute to this degree. Its two-year structure, coursework followed by a thesis, was identified and probed for possible improvements. There was significant discussion about enrolment trends in relation to tuition fee increases – including a discussion of the possible relations among a recent tuition increase, a decline in enrolment, and the effect of the establishment of a new PhD program -- and 6 recommendations emanating from the Self-Study, all of them responded to by the Deans in their review of the Self-Study.

As is the case with all graduate programs at SMU, this response to the Self-Study (in September 2018) engaged both the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, and the Dean of the Faculty (in this case, the Faculty of Science). The lone recommendation the Deans did not support was that the program be reduced in length from two years to one. The Deans also offered a measured analysis of and response to the debate about the tuition increase, the decline in enrolment in the MSc, and the effect of the new PhD program.

The External Review was conducted on September 17 and 18, 2018; among its salient recommendations in the Reviewers' Report submitted December 5, 2018 was the establishment of a curriculum committee, the provision of more adequate student space, and an increased level of funding to students enrolled in the program. In its February 22, 2019 response to the External Review Report, the Department signalled its gratitude for the reviewers' thorough and careful assessment of the program. The Deans' response ensued on April 30, 2019. In August 2019, an Action Plan was articulated with a Table indicating the status of each action undertaken in

response to each recommendation; The one-year report vetting by Academic Planning took place on May 6, 2020.

The reviewer who read this dossier finds that SMU followed its new program review process successfully. The units involved in the process, including the External Reviewers, engaged all relevant factors of the program under review and the ensuing recommendations have either been adopted, are in the process of being adopted, or have been rejected with a coherent rationale for that decision. Clearly, there will need to be further discussions in subsequent reviews about changing enrolment patterns in the Master's program as a result of the implementation of the new PhD program, and about the longer term effect of higher tuition fees as this program develops, both within SMU and, more generally, in relation to the program's position among other similar programs in the Maritime Provinces; but the framework for this recent review, as well as for future reviews, seems to be well established.

Classics and Modern Languages

The steps constituting this program review took place between June 8, 2017 and May 2, 2018. Properly, the review proceeded along the same path outlined directly above in the description of the review of the MSc in Applied Sciences, save that Classics and Modern Languages, as an undergraduate program, was reviewed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts; the Dean of Graduate Studies was not involved.

This program review highlighted the distinctive nature of Classics and Modern Languages at SMU, and exemplified Saint Mary's successful resolution of a problem experienced by many North American and Western European universities: the plight of small, often shrinking humanities programs. At SMU this successful merger of two Humanities programs is evidence of the merged program's fit with SMU's vocation as a multidisciplinary institution that promotes intense engagement and interaction among departments. Here, this multidisciplinarity is exemplified in the recent establishment of what looks to be a very successful Intercultural Studies major, drawing on the strengths not only of Classics and Modern Languages but also on several programs beyond these two; this new program augurs a bright future for this successfully merged program. This is a true innovation, worthy of that overused term's being justly conferred on it. Without doubt, there will be challenges for this program as it develops, chief among them sustaining enrolments and garnering scarce institutional resources to fund scarce new faculty positions. But the promise of Intercultural Studies attests to SMU's nimbleness in finding creative and academically viable academic programming to fit with the institution's vision and vocation for intercultural activities on many fronts.

Review of Academic Support Units

On the afternoon of the first day's (virtual) site visit, the reviewers met with the occupants of two key positions at SMU: the Senior Director of Student Affairs and Services, and the Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning. Like the Librarian's position and that of the newly created Registrar, these are vital roles in the fostering of relations between what are too often seen as Two Solitudes in Canadian universities: the faculty and students on one hand, and the Student Services that support them on the other. That conception of the two solitudes, beginning, thankfully, to recede among forward-thinking institutions like Saint Mary's and elsewhere across the country, is often giving way to a more integrated and concentric way of conceiving of these units' functions. Clearly, Student Services at SMU perceives its work as integral to the work of faculty and students; the multiple functions of Student Affairs and Services, alongside the wide array of services administered by the AVP, Teaching and Learning, demonstrate an institution-wide desire to further integrate the SMU academic community into a whole, rather than two or more "sides" of the academic mission. And the re-conceived administrative structure that now has these units reporting to the position of Vice-President, Academic and Research, will, we believe, reinforce this positive integration, to the entire academic community's benefit.

On the afternoon of the second day, the reviewers met with the Registrar and the Librarian for a very profitable hour – profitable, because we learned about what in our view is another highly significant and positive recent organizational change at SMU that has already begun to reap its rewards for the institution. We learned that the Registrar – a newly revised position – now reports to the (Acting) Associate Vice-President, Academic and Enrolment Management. This development, we believe, will enhance the abilities of the Registrar to engage more directly with several vital facets of her portfolio and with faculty, staff, and students, while at the same time allowing the Associate Vice-President to operate more consistently at a more strategic level. The Registrar, who has been in this key revised position for 10 months, will be able to work closely with her constituents, bringing her close to twenty years' experience at SMU to bear on a function that – given SMU's focus on and its commitment to diversity, multidisciplinarity, and an engaged community of learners – will promote these values at ground level. It will be very interesting to watch how this position evolves; in the cosmos of Student Services, the Registrar's position should be able to provide a crucial focal point from which to continue developing ever stronger connections and articulations between and among SMU's core constituencies.

Meeting with Students

The reviewers met with a student panel at the end of the first day (Wednesday, May 20). We considered this exchange critical to gain an understanding of how SMU's stated vision, strategic goals, and policies translate themselves into the lived experience of current SMU students. We were fortunate to meet students from across SMU's academic areas, including graduate and

undergraduate studies and the Faculties of Arts, Business, and Science; as well, we were joined by the President of the Saint Mary's Students Association.

We have mixed feelings about what we learned. On one hand, we found the students to a person to be delightfully engaged, articulate, and forthcoming members of the SMU academic community. Our concerns that students might find this virtual encounter awkward, or that they might be hesitant to participate in an exchange with two strangers inquiring about their experience with "Quality Assurance" proved, happily, to be entirely unfounded. They were pleased to describe their academic experience at SMU and their comments were thoughtful and informative.

On the other hand, some of what we learned indicated that there still exists a gap between SMU's articulated vision and its practice. Students were not particularly happy, for example, with what they perceived to be the utility of student evaluations; they did not see that these were effective instruments to measure their classroom experience or to improve it if improvement was needed. Similarly, they were not positive in their assessments of the efficiency or effectiveness of communication at SMU – including communication about the transition to online instruction this Spring and its ramifications. We are strongly confident that Saint Mary's is keenly interested in its students' learning and, in general, in the academic mission of the university and in its students' experience at SMU. But the ongoing work of translation of these laudable ideals – ideals in which everyone at SMU believes, including students, it does seem to us -- into action and practice appears to require further and more careful attention.

Meeting with Faculty Members

The reviewers also had the opportunity to meet with a panel of three faculty members on Thursday morning, one each from the School of Business, the Faculty of Science, and the Faculty of Arts.

As was the case with the student panel, we found these members of the SMU community to be delightfully forthcoming and forthright, informed and engaging, and admirably committed to SMU. In addition, these three were all recent newcomers to SMU; in our view, these colleagues are vital constituents of SMU's future.

And therefore, as with the students, we had some mixed feelings about what we heard from these members of SMU's faculty. Their commitment to the ideals and the vision of SMU was unquestionable; likewise their infectious energy and good will, and the professional accomplishments they already are clearly bringing to their work. But we did hear that their participation in the work of program review was seriously hampered and constrained by their

lack of preparation for the processes that they felt had been thrust upon them. It would seem that a straightforward and easily implemented resolution to this problem would be to ensure that an orientation session be provided to all new faculty (and, for that matter, to returning faculty as well) that presented the SMU policy and practice of program review, explaining its relevance to faculty's and students' academic work at SMU and to the continuous improvement of its programs that SMU clearly believes in.

We also heard that communication at SMU could, in the experience of these faculty members, be improved. Although effective and timely communication is particularly pressing, we believe, in the current conditions generated by the pandemic, communication is always a key node in the academic context, and we hope that SMU will find ways to continue to improve its performance in this area for all members of the SMU community.

<u>Meeting with the Deans</u>

The reviewers met with four Deans for an hour on the first day – from the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Science, the Sobey School of Business, and Graduate Studies. As is the case with most universities in Canada, the Deans at SMU are lynchpins in the program review process, responding as they do on one hand to External Reviewers' reports and Programs' Self-Studies, and on the other, engaging with senior administrators such as Associate Vice-Presidents and Vice-Presidents. The following is a summary of the main points made by the Deans in relation to the program review process:

- The program review process is considered to be a useful opportunity to examine programs and consider if changes are needed, and if so, should these be implemented and can they be resourced?
- It would be helpful if the program review process could be better aligned with the accreditation process, where applicable, in accordance with Senate Policy. **Note:** The University has since clarified that: *"It has been a practice at Saint Mary's for several years to work with the programs in better aligning program review with the accreditation process. The normal practice is that accreditation will usually precede program review but be coordinated within the same year. Relevant data and documentation within the accreditation report will be represented within the self-study as per MPHEC guidelines."*
- An example of positive change as a result of program review was cited as the Intercultural Studies Program in the Faculty of Arts, which was originally suggested by an external reviewer. This is now a well subscribed program, concerned with interculturality and a global community.

<u>Meeting with Senators</u>

The reviewers were grateful for the opportunity to meet with four senators, each with a different level of experience at SMU and on this committee central to all academic matters at SMU. We

were (pleasantly) intrigued to discover that, unlike Senates that we know in other Canadian universities, the Senate at SMU is chaired at this time, not by the usual senior administrator – typically, the President or Vice-President, Academic – but by an academic member of a Department. This arrangement appears to be functioning very well. We spent a highly profitable hour on the second day with the senators, who represented the Faculty of Arts, the Sobey School of Business, the Faculty of Science, and the SMUSA, represented by its VP.

The discussion was rich and invigorating. Among the contributions we note the following:

- Senate represents the culmination of "a cross faculty engagement throughout the program review process. Once it goes through the faculty, external reviewers, the planning committees, and etc., it goes to Senate for their review and evaluation." As one senator put it, "the program review is a lengthy process. Working on Senate has been useful to understand how the administration of the review occurs."
- Another Senator added to this thread on the role of Senate: "Outside the normal program review process, there is an expectation that departments will pass up through faculty representation on Senate … the broader issues for discussion. So, if an issue is not specific to program review, they are still being brought to Senate for discussion. There is a good communication chain between Senate, faculty, and the QA process."
- In response to our query as to whether Senate has ever rejected recommendations related to Program Reviews or proposals, it was noted that "Senate has never rejected all of the recommendations. But there has been heated debate over some particular recommendations or initiatives – these are seen as constructive conversations." This discussion led to mention of the "frustration [that] comes from the fact that recommendations will come from external reviewers; yet the Senate has no control over the purse strings of the institution – so in that way, their hands are tied. All that they can do is advocate." **Note:** The University has since clarified that: "*In 2019, APC established a process where recommendation items from program reviews would be streamed including those items that were considered to be beyond the purview of APC and Senate. As a result, the program review office began to stream recommendations annually and forward them again for review at APC and Senate. The first review of these streamed items occurred in October 2019. Plans are currently in process to continue this annual recommendation streaming/review and create better communication chains between Senate and the Board of Governors in relation to these items.*"
- It was noted, in response to a question about the relation between the Board and Senate, that there are no Senators on the Board: "There are faculty representatives; but they may or may not be senators at the same time. There is no formal communication chain between the Senate and Board of Governors. But the current Board of Governor chair is interested in having one annual meeting between the Board and Senate; and there is appetite for regular communication between the Board and the Senate."
- There were these significant and positive observations about the potential impact of Covid-19 on Senate: "The pandemic has not impacted the Senate's functionality. In fact, it has made them work a bit more – longer meetings and more frequent meetings. Senate

decided to meet across the summer to have discussions about Covid and university response." Another Senator noted that "the online meetings have been successful, people are more available. Bylaws committee raised [the point that] that there are no policies in place about Senators calling in or videoing into meeting so these are being developed. Senate has succeeded in exercising its responsibilities and duties. "

<u>Meeting with Chairs and Coordinators</u>

The reviewers believe this to have been a critical meeting to assist in gaining an understanding of the perceptions of and experience with the Program Review process from those most directly involved with overseeing and working with their respective faculty members' nuts and bolts acquaintance with this process. The four Chairs on the panel were from Economics, Modern Languages & Classics, Management, and the MSc in Applied Science – all units that had undergone recent Program Reviews. Chairs and coordinators see, at ground level, how the Review process originates with a Self Study -- work that itself involves faculty members collectively in scrutiny of their program – and proceeds with iterative exchanges between External Reviewers, the department, the relevant Dean, and Academic Planning and Senate. The Chair's unique perspective, from the origin of the Program Review through to its conclusion, emerged clearly in this meeting. The following summarises the main points made in relation to the program review process:

- The process is lengthy and time-consuming, especially given the other significant demands upon the time of Faculty members; however, the experience of participating in program review is developmental and aids understanding of its purpose. It is important to manage the follow-up process carefully, to ensure that recommendations are actioned appropriately

- Another Chair noted that "the response process was delayed because there was difficulty finding a Chair to lead the review. The department itself is complex because it offers a variety of majors and languages. In future reviews, the VPA suggests that reviews occur for individual programs or subsets of [this] department rather than the entire department. The review was all-encompassing so it was difficult to sift through; but it did result in some useful comments for the department. It is sometimes difficult to engage Faculty members with the purpose of program review.

- In a response to our query about the availability and usefulness of data in the Program Review process, it was noted that data were usually available and very useful. These were provided by the Registrar's office, in a detailed format (5yr and 10yr data). The importance of the availability of robust data to inform effective program review was affirmed by the Chairs and Coordinators.

- Another Chair noted that the review process was very helpful for the program, which benefited from the deep self-study and was very fortunate with the external reviewers. The timelines for the stages of the review are closely linked to the stages of the Academic Planning Committee. Consequently, they only had 7 months to conduct the review. Whilst this was a demanding timescale, the review resulted in a subsequently stronger program.

- This group offered a few general observations about change being an arduous process, and whilst the timeline has been reduced from 2 years to 1.5 years, this is still too long. It was observed that it would be helpful to streamline the process for introducing new courses and provide additional support for this process, with the introduction of templates to ensure consistency and accuracy of documentation. additional support would be beneficial.
- In their closing general remarks, we heard from the group that a more thorough evaluation of the impact resulting from the implementation of changes made as a consequence of program review would be helpful and appropriate to the culture of a learning organization.

Meeting with Academic Planning

As the clearing house for the reviews of all academic programs en route to Senate, Academic Planning at SMU, as in most universities in Canada, occupies possibly the most critical position in the Program Review process aside from the final arbiter of Reviews, the Senate. Therefore, we were eager to hear from this constituency about its role; about its strengths and weaknesses; and about the evolution of the Academic Planning Committee (APC) over the years at SMU. We met for an hour with the Acting Associate V.P. Academic & Enrolment Management who is also the Acting Chair of APC as well as with a Dean and faculty member who sit on APC.

Their comments were both informative and instructive:

- One member noted that "a lot of information goes through the APC. MPHEC reviews are very comprehensive (in a good way)." There is a representative from each faculty on APC as well as two students. APC meets 9 – 10 times a year. Because there is "a lot of documentation, [APC needs to] "find a way to streamline the documentation required." An APC member observed that "the committee works very well as a group and they have taken the responsibility seriously" but that there are points at which "roles are less clear – in the case of interdisciplinary programs.… there are instances where a program under review falls under the jurisdiction of multiple Deans. And in those instances, it can be less clear among the group who owns and answers to the program, for example graduate programs have the dean of graduate studies and the dean of the relevant faculty. But this does not impede the program review process taking place. It is not dysfunctional; but it does lead to some confusion."
- Regarding the typical process in SMU practice by which a program arrives on the floor at APC, we learned that "normally it comes up through a document process and individuals through the department can speak to it. Sometimes the chair, sometimes a department member, sometimes the Dean. It comes from various places – there isn't a defined process. Typically, the person who presents it is expected to answer the questions."
- In response to our query about rejection rates at APC, we heard that APC "Very rarely rejects. But approximately ¼ of the time, [a program] will get sent back for questions or for the department to reassess. It occurs more with the program review process than the

actual program proposal. And some programs are more challenging than others so they require more back and forth in their development process."

- We asked about the role and the use of data at APC and learned that "the level to which it is data driven is based on which faculty proposes it. In some disciplines there will be far less data used than other programs. There is a trend towards supporting proposals with data and enrolment figures; but it is not universal and it varies based on departments. We question data more presented to us more, departments have to provide evidence to support their statements."

- We asked how programs adapt to the changing environment between reviews, given that the cyclical reviews are done every 7 years. In response we heard that SMU has found that "the program review process is approximately a 3- to 4-year process. Some of those are done together (undergraduate and graduate). There are 100 programs and approximately 60 unique reviews have been conducted SMU confirmed that it complies with the MPHEC requirement to conduct program reviews on a seven-year cycle.

- It was commented that there are concerns about workload for the people engaged in program review. Also, historically, programs have tried to resolve all of their problems prior to the review, whereas now, faculty are bringing their issues to the review and looking for feedback and input on how to improve their processes. There are instances where departments can be protective of their programs; but in most instances, they are very open to changes.

- Lastly, an APC member noted that the review process "is seen as onerous but not punitive, faculty now see it as opportunity to reflect."

Commentary on Covid-19 Arrangements

At the close of each panel, we inquired as to the members' perceptions of SMU's response thus far to the pandemic, as well as to their assessment of SMU's level of preparedness for Fall 2020 and beyond. As we remarked at the beginning of this report, SMU's demonstrated expertise at deploying platforms such as Zoom are early testimony of SMU's readiness to engage in the pandemic and post-pandemic worlds. We were pleased to hear from the SMU community at large that the institution's response to the emergency that Covid-19 has thrust upon all of us appears thus far to have been effective and measured. It is too early to comment on the success of SMU's move to online delivery of its courses in Spring Session, or to how the online delivery of courses in Fall 2020, and possibly beyond, will evolve, save to note that preparations are well underway.

From the President's opening remarks forward, we heard of an institution that has responded excellently to its suddenly changed circumstances. Certainly, there will be room for continuing improvement in SMU's response to the pandemic; we did hear from some quarters that communication was not always timely, nor was it always effectively targeted to the proper constituencies. But alongside these critiques – which do merit reflection and remedial action, we believe – were the many positive comments about and examples of the SMU community's

willingness to meet these new circumstances with effective responses, such as Academic Planning's decision to meet throughout the summer to deal with issues arising from the pandemic. (The members of Academic Planning with whom we spoke were also very positive about the quantity and calibre of work completed during the extra Zoom meeting they had already attended.) In sum, we were impressed with SMU's planning and execution of measures and adaptations to the pandemic that will serve their community well in the coming academic year and beyond.

C.   Alignment with the MPHEC's 2016 Guidelines for Maritime Universities' Quality Assurance Frameworks

The table included in Appendix E shows that SMU is largely in alignment with the MPHEC 2016 Guidelines for Quality Assurance Frameworks and the reviewers recognize the significant responses made in respect of the previous MPHEC review in 2008. Throughout the review, evidence was presented in relation to the improvements which have been implemented and evaluated during this period and SMU is encouraged to continue this positive and developmental approach to quality assurance and enhancement. The review indicated, however, that there are some instances where further developments would be beneficial to processes and outcomes and the recommendations made are intended to support SMU in addressing these.

SECTION III: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Following careful consideration of all the evidence presented to the reviewers, the following recommendations are made to SMU:

1. For Senate to consider how the term 'program review' is interpreted in the application of its policy, particularly when reviewing the component parts of large degree programs (e.g. the Bachelor of Commerce)

2. To consider how formal communications between Senate and Board can be improved, to facilitate decision making, together with ensuring appropriate representation from Faculty and Academic Support Units. This is particularly relevant where the allocation of resources is needed to support recommended changes as a result of program review.

3. To continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the revised institutional management structure and the newly designated roles within this, to monitor its effectiveness in quality assurance and enhancement of the student experience.

4. To continue the development of data capacity and capability to promote informed decision making at all levels within SMU, this is necessary to enable timely and agile responses to specific events (such as the Covid-19 pandemic)

5. Ensure that the above incorporates technology enabled learning and learning analytics, which evaluate the usage and effectiveness of different resources and modes of delivery. This will promote individualized learning, in line with the values of diversity held by SMU, such as enabling more customized and differentiated learning for diverse student cohorts.

6. To provide a more systematic induction and orientation for newly appointed faculty members regarding institutional policies and procedures. This will encourage engagement with, and appreciation of, the program review process.

7. To streamline the new course proposal process, so that innovation and change are facilitated where appropriate. This could be supported by the introduction of templates to ensure consistency and transparency of relevant documentation.

8. To strengthen the communications strategy and its delivery modes for both staff and students, to ensure that information is communicated to all relevant parties in a timely and accurate manner. For example, the use of a sole and designated medium and address for all formal communications.

9. To develop greater opportunities for the student voice to be heard and ensure that students are aware of how their feedback in evaluations and surveys is responded to.

Appendices

A. Follow-up action plan submitted by Saint Mary's University
B. Table outlining alignment of the Saint Mary's University's Policies and Procedures for Assessing Academic Programs and Units with the MPHEC's 2016 Guidelines (including comments from Review Panel)
C. Site Visit Agenda
D. A copy of the assessment report from the "1st cycle"
E. Second Cycle of the Monitoring of Maritime Universities' Quality Assurance Frameworks: Overview of the Process

Saint Mary's University

February 15, 2022

Ms. Catherine Stewart
Chief Executive Officer
Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission
82 Westmorland Street, Suite 401
PO Box 6000
Fredericton, New Brunswick
E3B 5H1

Dear Catherine,

Please find attached our updated responses to recommendations #2 and #9 for our Quality Assurance Monitoring (QAM) Action Plan. These two recommendations involved a lengthy examination of best practices, models in place at comparable higher education institutions, and consideration of our existing processes and internal governance structures. Again, we would like to take this opportunity to apologize for our delay in addressing these two recommendations.

Recommendation #2:

In my previous email to you in June 2021, I had explained the obstacles that we were navigating in accomplishing Senate approval in changing our governance relationship between Senate and the Board. We anticipate that the newly established University Secretariat at Saint Mary's will serve in both facilitating and enhancing these communication channels moving forward.

Recommendation #9:

Our response to recommendation #9 is somewhat complex and multifaceted. Certain approaches and strategies related to reporting student voice are contingent upon our upcoming collective agreement negotiations. Other approaches we have initiated, are more situated in our ongoing and formative institutional process of changing community mindsets around best practices in utilizing student feedback in an effort to support our continuous program quality improvement process.

Again, we hope that the considered responses offered in this updated Action Plan help to formatively address concerns related to the two remaining recommendations that we were tasked to address and clarify.

World without limits.

Sincerely,

Dr. Malcolm Butler
Vice-President, Academic and Research

Enclosure

World without limits.

Quality Assurance Monitoring
Follow-Up Action Plan

	QAM Reviewer Recommendations	Action To Be Taken	Update January 2022	Time Line
1.	For Senate to consider how the term 'program review' is interpreted in the application of its policy, particularly when reviewing the component parts of large degree programs (e.g. the Bachelor of Commerce).	Senate Policy on Program Review of Programs is regularly reviewed and revised every 7 years at a minimum. Review of this policy has been more frequently reviewed over the past decade with revisions drafted in 2014, 2016 and most recently 2019. As part of a comprehensive review throughout the 2018-2019 academic year, a Senate subcommittee was tasked to reconsider the interpretation of the term "program review" in specific reference to reviewing the component parts of large degree programs. While the term "program review" remained to be defined in its "broadest sense", a contextual distinction was made between the reviews of programs in a specific department or unit (e.g. Majors, minors, certificates) and programs reviewed in an entire Faculty (e.g. BComm, BSc, BA). In addition to defining the term, the processes involving the review of Faculty level reviews were considered and discussed. This proved to be a timely exercise since plans were already in place to review the core elements of the Bachelor of Commerce (BComm) degree program throughout the 2019-2020 academic year. As a process, it was decided that the review of Faculty level programs would follow those of the reviews of programs conducted at a department or unit level. While the review of Faculty-level programs is complex and multi-faceted, many valuable lessons were learned and continue to be learned from the process of engaging in the BComm program review this past year. Lessons learned included best practices in faculty-wide		Subsequent to the results of the BComm Program Review, which we expect will be completed approximately March 2021, an APC subcommittee will initiate a policy review in the 2021-2022 academic year.

2/15/2022

	engagement in these reviews. As we continue to move through this process, we can continue to determine more specifically how to properly address the review of Faculty level programs and in this process hopefully continue to refine our definition of the term "program review".		
2.	To consider how formal communications between Senate and Board can be improved, to facilitate decision making, together with ensuring appropriate representation from Faculty and Academic Support Units. This is particularly relevant where the allocation of resources is needed to support recommended changes as a result of program review.	The consensus at Saint Mary's is that the enhancement of more formal connections between the Board and Senate are desirable in facilitating ongoing communication between the two governing bodies on current issues. The most viable suggestion that has been put forth by the Chair of the Senate ByLaws Committee and the Senate Secretary is that the Senate Chair (who is elected annually) assumes this role. However, there is a strong sentiment that the Chairperson to assume this role be a faculty member that is engaged in regular teaching, university processes, and has a firsthand knowledge of academic program review related process from both micro and macro perspectives. As opposed to an observer position, this Senate representative should be free to take part in full discussion and voting. Other requirements for this role would be the ability to transcend disciplinary and faculty specific concerns when participating in Board level discussions. This would ensure that the role is one that advocates for the excellence and integrity of all programs in all faculties and to the advancement of the University as an institution of higher learning. Furthermore, this role would help ensure advocacy for faculty and student concerns relating to the excellence of academic programs and academic integrity that may not make it to the Board otherwise. Other recent avenues of information sharing between Faculty and the Board that have already been actioned are assisting in helping to identify synergies of interest that may serve as a conduit in connecting institutional	As of January 1, 2022, Saint Mary's University has established a University Secretariat under the leadership of Claire Milton, University Secretary and Senior Director, Legal Services. The Secretariat will be the office responsible for overseeing the effective and efficient operation of a shared system of university governance, providing governance and administrative support to both the Board of Governors and the Senate. One of the responsibilities of the Secretariat is providing administrative support for the coordination and facilitation of the activities of Senate and the Board of Governors and their various committees, to ensure the effective cross-training and communication in the operation of the University's bicameral system of governance. This change follows a lengthy examination of best practices, models in place at comparable higher education institutions,	Currently in planning and development (2020-2021) Completed as of January 2022.

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		research initiatives to further opportunities external to the university. As an example, researchers at Saint Mary's deliver presentations to the Board on a regular basis. This is an opportunity for Board members to understand the work that is being done and may trigger further opportunities for engagement. Another example that has already been actioned over the past three years, is the hosting of an annual event to bring the Board, Senate, and SMUSA together for an evening of presentations, open discussions, and network exchange. These events have proven to be successful and impactful with at least two faculty members receiving external funding opportunities for research. We feel that this can also have a positive waterfall effect on students where they can become more involved in the campus research community fabric. In summary, plans are moving forward to continue exploring both formal and informal engagement strategies in enhancing relationships between the Senate and Board in order to facilitate decision making and leverage opportunities aimed at improving overall quality programming at Saint Mary's.	==and consideration of our internal governance structures.==	
3.	To continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the revised institutional management structure and the newly designated roles within this, to monitor its effectiveness in quality assurance and enhancement of the student experience.	Progress toward the University Strategic Plan and the Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) plan is being made. In both these plans there is clear need and expectation of program review and renewal. Currently, with the SEM plan, we are working on the development of key goals, objective, and outcomes, along with trackable metrics, to assess progress toward our goals.		Projected completion by the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.
4.	To continue the development of data capacity and capability to promote informed decision making at	Institutional Data Analysis and Planning (IDAP) is working closely with Financial services to connect SMU's enrolment and financial data. We have created a course enrolment report and have uploaded the data into		Various project completion dates set throughout 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

	all levels within SMU, this is necessary to enable timely and agile responses to specific events (such as the Covid-19 pandemic)	Vena to run numerous analyses, so we can better gauge registrations for upcoming terms. This information is shared with EMG on a weekly basis. Some additional action areas are as follows: • The creation of annual department reports that will include 5 years of data on registrations, majors/minors/, graduates, grade distribution/DFW rates, etc. ' • Data visualization tools are being examined to determine which one best meets our needs for sharing data with senior management, faculty and staff. (Tableau and Power BI). • We are exploring Ellucian products that will expand/enhance our data analytics capability by connecting our various database systems.		
5.	Ensure that the above incorporates technology enabled learning and learning analytics, which evaluate the usage and effectiveness of different resources and modes of delivery. This will promote individualised learning, in line with the values of diversity held by SMU, such as enabling more customized and differentiated learning for diverse student cohorts.	In addition to what was noted above in #4, we are also working to develop more effective predictive analytics programs. We began an initial approach using data from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and have now purchased a predictive analytics package which will be rolled out in 2021. This approach will allow us to more quickly identify students at risk. The COVID-19 reality has also caused us to more all courses online so the need to enhance approaches to technology enabled learning is paramount. We have begun a program to enhance the quality and availability to online education, and we are working, using some of the tools described above (e.g., Tableau) to more effectively harness data from our learning management system and thus support student learning and success.		Various project completion dates set throughout 2020-2021.
6.	To provide a more systematic induction and orientation for newly appointed faculty members regarding institutional policies and procedures. This will	Although new faculty members are usually not expected to participate on self-study committees during their period of onboarding, plans are in the works to include more new faculty members in the program review orientation program workshops that are held every April.		2021-2022 academic year

	encourage engagement with, and appreciation of, the program review process.	The Studio for Teaching and Learning has also established a formal and integrated year-long orientation program for newly appointed faculty. Within this program, it would be worth exploring how to better facilitate the introduction of the concepts of program quality assurance and program enhancement. This could include the development of workshops that focus on important elements of best curriculum and classroom based practices that feed into the quality assurance process. Such workshop themes could be in the areas of curriculum design, assessment practices, and active learning pedagogies. In addition, workshops could also offer support in relating better and best practices in approaching formative evaluations in the classroom (see recommendation #9). This recommendation has been forwarded to the Senate Standing Committee on Learning and Teaching (SCoLT) for their consideration and advice in the 2020-2021 academic year.		Added to SCoLT meeting agenda for November 6 2020 (targeting 2021-2022 academic year)
7.	To streamline the new course proposal process, so that innovation and change are facilitated where appropriate. This could be supported by the introduction of templates to ensure consistency and transparency of relevant documentation.	As in the case with the program review process, the course proposal process is also regularly reviewed. Although templates are in existence and are also regularly updated, there is often misunderstanding about the course proposal process. Much of this misunderstanding is the result of misinformation and miscommunication. In an effort for more clarity around this process, plans are being made to work closely with ITSS to identify if online access to course proposal process information can be improved to link interested stakeholders to information and policies that they require. This will involve considerations on how to enhance more interconnected links in documents and policies. The Senate Curriculum Committee is currently tasked with reviewing and updating 8-1013_Senate Policy on Submissions to the Senate Curriculum Committee, to include revision and creation of templates. The CourseLeaf software program		By the end of academic year (2020-2021).

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		is currently being implemented and will significantly improve the curriculum revision and addition processes.		
8.	To strengthen the communications strategy and its delivery modes for both staff and students, to ensure that information is communicated to all relevant parties in a timely and accurate manner. For example, the use of a sole and designated medium and address for all formal communications.	The university continues to make investments in communications at Saint Mary's University. In 2018, the university added the position of Internal Communications Officer, responsible for overseeing communications to staff and faculty. In 2019, the university added the Student Communications Officer who builds strategic communications plans and executes communications for students. The addition of these two important positions demonstrates that the university is placing a priority on internal communications to all audiences: faculty, staff and students. The Student Communications Officer is chairing a new working team under the university's Student Success Committee, focusing on Student Communications & Engagement. Other initiatives include the new social media channels known as Student Life, started in July 2020. The channels combines information that was previously spread over several separate channels. The new channels are experiencing better results in terms of reach and engagement. This is being measured and reported. Student Life will also have a new web presence, to go live in Fall 2020. This webpage will replace outdated webpages and bring greater web clarity and access to information for current students. All students now receive the #SMUCommunity Bulletin, a weekly newsletter of stories, updates and timely news for the entire Saint Mary's community. The Student Communications Officer is also working with departments across the university to develop systems and processes for better internal collaboration, which will lead to an enhanced communication experience for students. Faculty and staff are also receiving the weekly #SMUCommunity Bulletin. There are frequent mass emails to all faculty and staff from members of the		Currently in planning and development (2020-2021) Weekly SMU Bulletin Communication initiated in April 2020. Frequency of Town Halls has increased since May 2020. Virtual platform has resulted in increased community participation. Town Hall sessions are now recorded and posted on the SMU website for campus wide access.

		executive management group (EMG) ensuring that they receive information in a timely and consistent manner. Members of EMG regularly hold virtual town halls with high participation and engagement from both faculty and staff. This is a new practice begun during the pandemic, evolved from the more traditional in-person town halls that were held in previous years on campus. In response to the pandemic the university created a new web section devoted to the 'virtual university' with information tailored for the three main audiences: faculty, staff and students. While the focus on communications to faculty, staff and students was commenced before the onset of Covid-19, there is no doubt that the pandemic has driven a demand for greater and more frequent communications and this has resulted in more timely and more regular communications across the university. Once the pandemic is over, many of these new practices will remain to the benefit of the university and its members.		
9.	To develop greater opportunities for the student voice to be heard and ensure that students are aware of how their feedback in evaluations and surveys is responded to.	1. The context of this recommendation seemed to stem from the student meeting session where it was reported that students "*were not particularly happy...with what they perceived to be the utility of student evaluations; they did not see that these were effective instruments to measure their classroom experience or to improve it if improvement was needed*" (pg. 12). The evaluation tool referenced here is the Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE) survey conducted in all credit classes at the end of each semester. Students cited similar issues with our previous evaluation instrument over a decade ago. At that time, the predecessor of the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching (SCoLT) undertook a significant review of evaluation instruments being utilized by the postsecondary sector and after significant research and	1. The issue of the Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE) management has been under formative discussions throughout the past year in considering how best to change the culture and thinking at SMU on the evaluation of teaching. As there are some inherent collective agreement implications with some of the suggestions that have been put forward, this is an issue that must be	Senate Sub-committee review of instructor course evaluation tool and process initiated October 2020. Planning and development (2020-2021) Further planning and development 2022.

		consultation, they decided to use an instrument developed by Dr. Herbert March of the University of Western Sydney, Australia, known as the "Student's Evaluation of Educational Quality" (SEEQ). In an ongoing effort in our review process, a Senate Sub-committee has been tasked with reviewing the ICE tool and related evaluation processes. While there is undoubtedly great value in the summative feedback received from the ICE survey results, Saint Mary's is striving to promote effective evaluation tools and approaches to more formatively monitor student attitudes and enhance student voice in their overall learning process and campus experience. As an example, we have just released an early term survey designed to monitor student experiences learning remotely during the Covid pandemic. The Senate Sub-committee cited above has also been tasked with exploring functionality of software programs that will enable efficient campus wide formative evaluation.	part of a collaborative agreement between the University and the Faculty Union. We are in the midst of bringing this to the attention of both parties involved. Further progress is expected in the summer of 2022 as the Collective Bargaining negotiation process commences.	
		2. Additionally, the Program Review Office has been actively exploring more effective inroads in creating faculty culture around the benefits of formative classroom-based evaluations throughout the semester/year. Last November, the Manager, Program Review, attended a 2-day Symposium on "Student Voices in Quality Assurance" in Toronto with a small delegation of Saint Mary's program advisors. The Saint Mary's delegation brought back a variety of innovative ideas and approaches in eliciting formative classroom experiences from students that can help support programs more effectively with their ongoing quality assurance/program enhancement processes. As an action item, the Program Review Office is recommending the development of faculty workshops	2. While the ongoing pandemic somewhat impeded progress, there have been some recent positive developments in this area. Considering the formative nature of institutional culture change, it is anticipated that efforts and impact in this area will take both time and concerted support from both our Program Review Office and our educational	Added to SCoLT meeting agenda for November 6 2020 (targeting 2021-2022 academic year) Further planning and development currently continuing in 2022.

	that foster more reflective practices around student feedback. Workshops in this area have proven to have a positive impact on quality assurance and continued program enhancement. This recommendation (along with recommendations cited above in # 6) has been forwarded to the Senate Standing Committee on Learning and Teaching (SCoLT) for their consideration in the 2021- 2022 academic year.	development unit in the Studio. To this end, a faculty focused symposium event on "Reflective Teaching Practice" (as suggested by the Program Review Office) has been planned for February 2022. This event has been developed for faculty at Saint Mary's in an effort to share best practices in reflective teaching which includes the consideration of student voice in the continuous program improvement process. This peer faculty event is the first of its kind and currently being promoted on our Studio website with the following description: **"Reflective Teaching Practice** **The theme of this year's symposium is *Building Teacher-Student Connections Through Reflective Teaching Practice.*** **One of the most powerful practices used by effective teachers is reflection. This involves the constant and intentional process of looking back on, and**	

		critically reviewing our teaching experiences and assumptions that inform our practice as teachers. In a reflective review, we become deeply aware, not only of what we are teaching, but also how and why. In addition to our personal experience, we learn how students respond to, or are affected by our teaching, as a well as learn through our colleagues' perceptions. Reflection thus is an important catalyst for teachers' professional and personal development and growth". This renewed focus on reflective practice will be implemented as part of our longer-term strategy in enhancing more faculty-to-student engagement.	

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution? Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice	SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES				
These guidelines aim to assist institutions in establishing or improving their quality assurance frameworks (and related policies and processes) and to support the Commission when assessing the frameworks in place.			**N/A**	
2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES				
A successful university quality assurance framework[1] is guided by:				
2.1 The pursuit of continuous improvement;	Yes	Yes	Section 2 in the Senate Policy on Program Review outlines Saint Mary's "policy revision" process that aims to systematically "ensure that the policy stays current and relevant to its users and reflects changes in quality assurance and program enhancement processes".	Agree
2.2 A focus on learning;	Yes	Yes	A focus on learning is central to the Saint Mary's Program Review inquiry process and is integrated into our Framework for Review of Academic Programs in reference to the following: Program Description (section 6.2)-Programs are encouraged to identify "analyzing factors such as pedagogical practices and modes of course delivery and teaching/learning resources" in their self-study. Outcomes (section 6.3)-Closely consider aligning student learning in relation to well defined program level outcomes Resources (section 6.4)- Programs "Identify and critically analyze how human, physical, and financial resources affect and contribute to the teaching and learning environment for students in the program" in relation to their contribution to the enhancement of student learning.	Agree
2.3 The necessity of encompassing all functions and units of an institution;	Somewhat	Somewhat	The scope of program review at SMU is articulated in section 1 in the Senate Policy of the Review of Programs All academic functions and units are subject to program review under our policy (key differentiator is "academic").	Agree; however it would be useful to consider the scope of particular program reviews in large UG degree courses, such as the BComm. See comments from reviewer on the Management dossier.
2.4 Accountability and transparency; and	Yes	Yes	Articulated in section 5 "Steps in the Review Process" in reference to all programs being accountable to the respective deans, APC, and Senate.	Agree
2.5 The documentation and implementation of policies, guidelines and procedures.	Yes	Yes	SMU has a Manager of Program Review who oversees and facilitates the process. We have a policy document and a handbook available on our website to all members of the community. A systematic scheduling and tracking process has been implemented to monitor the progress of program reviews and their outcomes as a result from process.	Agree

1. This document refers to an institutional quality assurance framework, which may encompass multiple policies and procedures covering an institution's work in this area (e.g., faculty specific policies that reflect various realities, or separate policies for academic units and other types of units).

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution? Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice	SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
3. SCOPE OF A UNIVERSITY'S QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK				
A university's quality assurance framework:				
3.1 Reflects its mission and values;	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's quality assurance framework ensures alignment with our institutional mission statement articulated as follows in the current Strategic Plan 2017- 2022: "The mission of Saint Mary's University is to offer undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs; to engage in research and disseminate its results; and to serve the community from the local to the international level".	Agree
3.2 Accounts for the full range of its offerings and activities;	Yes	Yes	During the process of reviewing the Program Review Policy, an audit of offerings and established owner. The program review schedule is being created using this audit.	Agree
3.3 Links to the institution's strategic and other plans;	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's Quality Assurance Framework in strongly aligned to both the Strategic Plan and the Academic Plan that is currently in development. Enhanced efforts for the renewed development of an integrated teaching and learning plan to support courses and programs is a key element in the new Academic Plan.	Agree
3.4 Includes provisions to cover all of the functions and units of the institution (research, administration, community service, etc.) and applies to the full spectrum of a student's university experience; and	Somewhat	Somewhat	The review process of all "non-academic units" is not fully encompassing at this time.	Agree, further consideration of this aspect would be helpful.
3.5 Is forwarded to the MPHEC.	**N/A**			
4. OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIVERSITY'S QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK				
The objectives of a university quality assurance framework are, at a minimum, to assure the quality of programs and to ensure that stated student outcomes can be realized.	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review is clear on its objectives as articulated in section 2: "Program Review is a process of internal, formative self- evaluation combined with and guided by peer review. It is aimed at monitoring and improving student learning and the many facets that support learning".	Agree
The purpose of each institution-led assessment is to answer the following two questions:				
first, "How well is the unit or the program achieving what it set out to accomplish?" and	Yes	Yes	This question is addressed in the course of the self-study process. Departments and programs explore their alignment to the mission and value statements they have drafted.	Agree
/second, "is it doing what it should be doing?"	Yes	Yes	This question is typically answered through the process of curriculum mapping.	Agree
In answering the above questions, the university examines:				
4.1 Inputs; and	Yes	Yes	Information placed in program self-studies	Agree

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution?		SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
	Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice		
4.2 Outputs.	Yes	Yes	Self-study assessments measured through the program review process.	Agree to some extent. Please see the reviewers' comments in the addendum to the report on institutional processes to identify and assess student/learning outcomes

5. STANDARD[2] FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS/UNITS				
5.1 Central Components				
To assess academic programs/units[3], an institutional quality assurance framework would, at a minimum:				
5.1.1 Identify the coordinating or administrative unit responsible for the overall management of the quality assurance process. This unit is located at a higher echelon (e.g. vice-president) of the institution's administrative structure, and	Yes	Yes	The Manager, Program Review is responsible for the overall management of the quality assurance process at Saint Mary's. The Manager, Program Review is under the direction of the Associate Vice-President, Enrolment Management.	Agree
is accountable to the institution's decision-making bodies.	Yes	Yes	Operations overseen and facilitated by the Manager, Program Review are accountable to APC and Senate.	Agree
5.1.2 Assign and distribute responsibility for the various components of the quality assurance framework (deans, department heads, program managers, committees, etc.).	Yes	Yes	Responsibility for the various components of the quality assurance framework are distributed among the following: a) Program chairs and/or coordinators who form the committees that draft the program self-studies and respond to recommendations delivered by external reviewers, deans, APC, and Senate b) Respective deans who respond to program self-studies and program responses to recommendations delivered by external reviewers, APC, and Senate.	Agree
5.1.3 Define the assessment criteria	(see section 5.2 below).			
5.1.4 Require a self-study,	Yes	Yes	Self-study requirements are outlined in Section 6 (Framework for Review of Academic Programs) in Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review. Further pertinent supporting information is provided in the Program Review Handbook.	Agree
involving faculty and students participating in the program or unit.	Yes	Yes	Faculty are responsible for the compilation of information drafted within the self-study. Student input via surveys and focus groups is now mandated within the Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review.	Agree
The self-study is student-centred as it would aim, in most cases, to assess the student experience and, in the case of academic programs, to assess the quality of learning and teaching.	Yes	Yes	Objectives stated in section 2 of the Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review explicitly state that the program review process is "aimed at improving student learning and the many facets that support learning".	Agree
The self-study is structured according to the defined assessment criteria, and is both descriptive and analytical.	Yes	Yes	Self-study requirements are outlined in Section 6 (Framework for Review of Academic Programs) in Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review. Further pertinent supporting information is provided in the Program Review Handbook.	Agree

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution?		SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
	Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice		
When and where appropriate, the results of accreditation processes may be included, and/or substituted for this component, or a portion thereof.[4]	Yes	Yes	Self-study requirements for Program Reviews Subject to Accreditation are in alignment with MPHEC qualifications and are outlined in the Senate Policy on Program Review (Section 7).	In practice, the Senate policy could be applied more effectively to ensure alignment of program reviews with the relevant accreditation reqirements.
5.1.5 Require an external review component	Yes	Yes	Section 3 in Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review references "peer review" as a guiding principle of the program review process. All programs are subject to a mandatory site visit by external reviewers. Site visits for programs occur once every 7 years for existing programs with an inaugural site visit occurring after the fifth year for new programs.	Agree, evidence of external review was presented in the sample of dossiers selected by the reviewers.
with a sufficiently comprehensive site visit and written report,	Yes	Yes	The External Review Committee (ERC) produce a written report in response to the self-study and information gathered during the site visit. The ERC outline a list of recommendations for the program that are responded to by the program, deans, APC, and Senate.	Agree, thoughtful and pertinent written reports of site visits were included in the sample of dossiers selected by the reviewers.
carried out by at least two experts external to the institution, with at least one coming from outside Atlantic Canada.	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's follows this policy and ensures diversity amongst reviewers. External reviewers are selected by APC on the advice of the programs.	Agree
The external reviewers' team should also include a senior faculty member from the institution to assist the external reviewers in the process and provide clarifications on the institution's context.	Yes	Yes	A senior faculty member, whenever possible, is selected to serve as an internal chair on the program review committee. The Manager, Program Review also assists in providing information regarding process steps.	Agree
As appropriate, the results of accreditation may be included, and/or substituted for this component, or a portion thereof.[4]	Yes	Yes	Self-study requirements for Program Reviews Subject to Accreditation are in alignment with MPHEC qualifications and are outlined in the Senate Policy on Program Review (Section 7).	N/A in the dossiers selected by the reviewers.
5.1.6 Ensure the participation of students through:				
membership on committees dealing with program review and quality assurance;	Somewhat	Somewhat	The Program Review process at Saint Mary's is currently working on ways to ensure students become more involved in the program review process.	The student engagement aspect of program review would benefit from further development.
participation in surveys designed to collect data on a number of student and graduate outcomes;	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review has recently required that student surveys become a mandatory component of the self-study.	Agree
and mandatory student course evaluations.	Somewhat	Somewhat	Student surveys are designed to capture feedback at a program level. Individual ICE course surveys are not included in the self-study. It is possible that some specific course feedback might be received in the student surveys.	How student surveys are used and responded to would benefit from further development.
5.1.7 Incorporate the participation of faculty not directly involved in the reviewed program (or discipline or unit).	Yes	Yes	A senior faculty member not directly involved in the reviewed program, whenever possible, is selected to serve as an internal chair on the program review committee. The Manager, Program Review also assists the internal chair and the PRC during the site visit.	Agree

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution?		SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
	Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice		
5.1.8 Enable the participation of the wider network of stakeholders, such as employers, graduates, professional associations, the local community, etc.	Yes	Yes	The VPAR participates in the interviews which is seen as constituting a stand-in for the employer. There are graduate and undergraduate student interviews as appropriate to the program. Staff members and technicians are also involved when relevant.	The dossiers submitted for this review did not include any evidence of whether wider stakeholders had been included in the program review process.
5.1.9 Define the follow-up mechanisms, which include				
the procedures	Yes	Yes	Follow-up procedures are outlined in section 5 of the Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review	Agree
areas of responsibility	Yes	Yes	Areas of responsibility are outlined in section 5 of the Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review	Agree
expected timelines,	Yes	Yes	Expected timelines are outlined in section 5 of the Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review	Agree
along with provisions for follow-up monitoring of progress (usually involving the Senate).	Yes	Yes	Provisions for follow-up monitoring of progress involve the Senate and are outlined in section 5 of the Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review	Agree
5.1.10 Establish the assessment cycle and related schedule which normally does not exceed seven years (with no programs exceeding, in practice, 10 years between reviews).[5]	Yes	Yes	All existing programs are required to undergo a program review once every 7 years. The 7 year program review schedule is available on the Program Review website.	Agree
5.1.11 Assess newly established programs or units after the first cohort has graduated.	Yes	Yes	Section 5 in Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review states that "All new programs will normally be reviewed after five years and subsequently added to the review schedule". This inaugural five-year review anticipates the timing where a first cohort would normally graduate from a new program.	Agree
5.1.12 Document the standard timeline for individual reviews, from the preparation of the self-study through to Senate approval of recommendations, normally 12 to 18 months.	Yes	Yes	Appendix …has documented the timelines for all programs that have been reviewed in the past 7 years. The majority of reviews from the receipt of the self-study through to Senate approval of recommendations fall within the 12 to 18 month timeframe.	Agree
5.1.13 Include a communication strategy to inform the university community (students, faculty, staff, etc.) and the general public about a university's quality assurance framework as well as significant changes brought about by quality assurance activities.	Yes	Yes	All program review documents including the program review schedule are publicly available on the Program Review website.	Whilst the relevant documents are made available on the website, the reviewers are not sure that this constitutes a strategy, and an orientation (in the program review process) for new faculty members would be helpful.
The communication strategy should include activities to inform faculty, staff and heads of units about the framework, its objectives, assessment criteria, and follow-up processes.	Yes	Yes	As above	See above comments.
5.1.14 Define the provisions to assess the framework periodically, normally at the end of each assessment cycle	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review mandates policy revision every seven years or as needed to accommodate necessary modifications to the policy document.	Agree
and table the resulting report with decision-making bodies within the institution (e.g., Senate, Board of Governors).			The resulting report is tabled with the Saint Mary's University Academic Planning Committee (APC) and the Senate.	Agree

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution? Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice	SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
2. The Commission uses the term Standard as 'A document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context'. ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, definition 3.2				
3. For the purpose of this section of the Guidelines, an academic unit is understood as a department or a unit whose mission is preponderantly teaching and whose nature reflects the existence of a demonstrably coherent field of knowledge, normally defined by close cognate disciplines. An academic unit may offer more than one program, but in the context of quality assurance, each program is to be assessed, including curriculum, outcomes, resources, etc.				
4. However, the quality assurance framework addresses gaps in accreditation processes (if any) to ensure the same standards are applied across all programs (e.g., reporting back to higher echelons of the institution). In exceptional circumstances, review cycles may be interrupted to accommodate other institutional priorities; in these cases, the MPHEC should be contacted and informed of the length/extent of the anticipated interruption (no program should exceed 10 years between reviews).				
5.2 Assessment Criteria				
Each university establishes assessment criteria for reviewing the quality of its programs/units. The assessment criteria are				
comprehensive in their range and in their use across programs and units;	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's has developed a standardized Quality Assurance Framework with assessment criteria that is both consistent and comprehensive in addressing the review of all programs.	Agree
they have a strong focus on students and	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's Senate Policy on Program Review states as a core tenant in its objectives (section 2) that the program review process "is aimed at monitoring and improving student learning and the many facets that support learning".	Agree
reflect the institutional mission and values.	Yes	Yes	Saint Mary's quality assurance framework ensures alignment with our institutional mission statement articulated as follows in the current Strategic Plan 2017- 2022: "The mission of Saint Mary's University is to offer undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs; to engage in research and disseminate its results; and to serve the community from the local to the international level". Furthermore, the Saint Mary's quality assurance framework aligns with our stated institutional values that "articulate our distinctive contribution to civil society, locally and globally". These values are highlighted accordingly: "Pursuing academic growth, Demonstrating resilience, Developing intercultural competence, Engaging our alumni and community; and Exercising ethical wisdom".	Agree
They are published and include at a minimum the following			Numbers below refer to relevant sections within the Quality Assurance Framework in the Senate Policy on Program Review regarding self-study criteria alignment to assessment criteria points	Agree
5.2.1 The continuing appropriateness of the program's structure, method of delivery and curriculum for the program's learning outcomes and the degree level expectations;	Yes	Yes	Sections 6.2 and 6.3	Agree
5.2.2 The achievement by students and graduates of the learning outcomes in light of				
the program's stated goals,	Yes	Yes	Section 6.1	Agree
the degree level expectations, and,	Yes	Yes	Sections 6.1 and 6.3	Agree

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution?		SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
	Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice		
where relevant, the standards of any relevant regulatory, accrediting or professional body;	Yes	Yes	Section 6.1	Agree
5.2.3 The continuing appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods used for the evaluation of student progress and achievement in light of the degree level expectations;	Yes	Yes	Sections 6.2 and 6.3	Agree
5.2.4 The capacity of the faculty and staff to deliver the program and the quality of education necessary for the students to achieve:				
the stated learning outcomes, and	Yes	Yes	Section 6.3	Agree
to meet the needs of the existing and anticipated student enrolments;	Yes	Yes	Section 6.1	Agree
5.2.5 The continuing performance of the faculty, including				
the quality of teaching and supervision, and	Yes	Yes	Section 6.3	Agree
their continuing progress and achievement in research, scholarship or creative activity, and	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
professional activity in light of the program under review;	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
5.2.6 The appropriateness of the support provided to the learning environment, including but not limited to library and learning resources (e.g., human, physical and financial resources; academic advising; student services; graduate studies office; registrar services; technological services; centres for teaching and learning, etc.), unless such supports are assessed through other means;	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
5.2.7 The effectiveness and appropriateness of the use made of				
the existing human resources	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
the existing physical resource	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
the existing technological resources	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
the existing financial resources; and	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
5.2.8 The continuing appropriateness of				
the academic policies (including admission, promotion and graduation requirements; requests for transfer credit and advanced standing; and appeals) and	Yes	Yes	Senate Policies are updated on an as needed basis.	Agree
of the governing and decision making structures of the academic unit; and	Yes	Yes	Academic Regulations are reviewed every two of three years to ensure there are no impediments to student success. Academic Regulations went through the most recent review of these regulations in 2019.	Agree
5.2.9 The definition of indicators that provide evidence of quality,				
including enrolments, graduation rates, time-to completion rates, student satisfaction level	Yes	Yes	Quality indicators are reviewed by the Board of Governors and by the Senate at least once a year.	Agree

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution?		SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
	Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice		
and, as appropriate, relevant measures of graduate outcomes (e.g., graduate employment rates, employment in field of study, employer satisfaction level, further study, etc.).			The Alumni Office strives to identify this information as much as possible.	No evidence of this was presented during the review; however, data capacity is being developed at SMU – see recommendation.

6. STANDARD FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF OTHER UNITS

A university's quality assurance framework ought to assess all functions and units of the institution. This includes the university's units whose missions are not driven by teaching, and in particular academic support units. The diversity of these units makes the development of general guidelines universally applicable across units and across universities challenging. It is up to the institution to determine whether each unit is assessed more effectively on its own or in conjunction with academic units (see 5.2.6, above).

The Commission will gather information from, and generate discussion with, universities on best practices in the assessment of other units. In the interim, universities are still expected to review these units and, at this stage, the Commission proposes the following four assessment criteria:

Note: Given the change of approach to addressing the assessment of other units, now named Academic Support Units, institutions are asked to complete Sections 6.1 to 6.4 (below) based on its policies/practices for assessing Academic Support Units directly related to academic programs/student learning (as applicable)

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Policy	Practice	SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
6.1 The continuing appropriateness and effectiveness of the service or support provided to the academic programs, students and faculty;	Yes	Yes	Out of the identified academic and non-academic support units at SMU, some have internal review processes that are initiated when required.	Agree
6.2 The capacity of the unit or program to deliver the service or support which its mandate defines;	Yes	Yes	The Saint Mary's Self-Study template as outlined in the Senate Policy on Program Review addresses the capacity of the programs' ability to support its mandate in the following sections below:	Agree
6.3 The appropriateness and efficiency of the use made of				
the existing human resources	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
the existing physical resource	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
the existing technological resources	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
the existing financial resources; and	Yes	Yes	Section 6.4	Agree
6.4 The contribution of the unit or program to other aspects of the institution's mission and to the student experience.	Yes	Yes	Sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.4	Agree

7. KEY DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH A UNIVERSITY'S QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Standardization and documentation of processes and procedures support two goals: a common and transparent process and shorter timelines. To this end, institutions should establish the following policy(ies), templates and standards:

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Policy	Practice	SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
FORMAL, APPROVED QUALITY ASSURANCE RELATED POLICY(IES)	Yes	Yes	Refer to Senate Policy on Program Review (appendix…)	Agree
GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE SELF-STUDY	Yes	Yes		Agree

MPHEC 2016 Guidelines	Guideline met by institution?		SMU Comments	Reviewers' Comments
	Policy (Yes/No/Somewhat)	Practice		
to include templates/data /source(s) for indicators/measures of quality (e.g., enrolments, graduation rates, time-to-completion rates, student/employer satisfaction level, graduate employment rates, employment in field of study, further study, etc.).	Yes	Yes	Refer to Self-Study template in Senate Policy on Program Review (appendix…)	Agree
GENERIC TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWERS	Yes	Yes	Terms of reference for external reviewers are outlined in the Senate Policy on Program Review and the New Senate Policy Handbook. The Manager, Program Review, extensively briefs reviewers about the terms of reference prior to the site visit.	Agree
COMMON STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION FORM	Yes	Yes	Student surveys are conducted and implemented into the Self-Study.	Agree
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR RELEVANT COMMITTEE(S)			Terms of reference for the Program Review Committee are described in the handbook.	Agree
GUIDELINES FOR THE REVIEW OF PROGRAMS THAT ARE ALSO SUBJECT TO ACCREDITATION	Yes	Yes	Refer to Section 7 Appendix A in the Senate Policy on Program Review	Agree

Virtual Site Visit to Saint Mary's University	
May 20, 2020	
9:20-9:50	Dr. Robert Summerby-Murray, President, Saint Mary's University
10:00-10:50	Dr. Malcolm Butler, Vice President Academic and Research
	Dr. Steven Smith, Acting Associate V. P. Academic & Enrolment Mgnt.
11:00-11:40	Dr. William Kay, Manager of Program Reviews
	Ms. Barbara Bell, Secretary of Senate
	Ms. Tracey MacDonald-Director of Institutional Analysis and Planning
11:40-12:20	Lunch Break
12:30-1:30	**Academic Planning Committee**:
	Dr. Steven Smith- Acting Associate V. P. Academic & Enrolment Mgnt.
	Dr. Lori Francis-Acting Dean of Science
	Dr. Mark Barr -Faculty Member (Department of English)
1:45-2:30	**Academic Support Units that contribute to the quality of academic programs** *Session 1*: Tom Brophy, Senior Director of Student Affairs & Services; Dr. Esther E. Enns, Assoc. Vice-President, Teaching & Learning
2:30-3:00	**Health Break**
3:00-4:00	**Deans' Panel**:
	Dr. Margaret MacDonald (Faculty of Arts),
	Dr. Harjeet Bhabra (Sobey School of Business),
	Dr. Lori Francis (Faculty of Science),
	Dr. Adam Sarty (Faculty of Graduate Studies)
4:15-5:00	**Student Panel** (with SMUSA President Bryn de Chastelain)
	Tasha Rabinowitz-MSc Applied Sciences
	Morgan Mitchell-MSc Applied Sciences
	Yingjun Chen-Modern Languages and Classics
	Jack Dawson-Economics
May 21, 2020	
9:20-10:30	**Chairs/Coordinators of recently reviewed programs**:
	Dr. Mark Raymond, Chair, Economics
	Dr. Myles McCallum, Chair, Modern Languages & Classics
	Dr. Cathy Driscoll, Former Acting Chair, Management
	Dr. Sam Veres, Chair, MSc Applied Sc.
10:40-11:20	**Faculty Panel**
	Dr. Vurain Tabvuma-Sobey School of Business
	Dr. Anne Dalziel-Faculty of Science
	Dr. Rachael Collins-Faculty of Arts
11:30-12:30	**Senate Panel**
	Dr. Tatjana Takseva-Faculty Member (Department of English, Faculty of Arts) and Senate Chair
	Dr. Christine Panasian-Faculty Member (Finance Info Sys & Mgmt., Sobey School of Business)
	Dr. Jacob Hanley-Faculty Member (Department of Geology, Faculty of Science)
	Ms. Abygail Winters -SMUSA VP
12:30-12:45	**Health Break**
12:45-1:45	**Academic Support Units that contribute to the quality of academic programs** *Session 2*: Tanya Killiam, Registrar; Suzanne van den Hoogen, Librarian;
1:45-2:30	**Panel only – Debrief**
2:30-3:10	**Closing Session**
	Dr. Steven Smith, Acting Associate V. P. Academic & Enrolment Mgnt.
	Dr. William Kay, Manager of Program Reviews
	Ms. Barbara Bell, Secretary of Senate