

Response of the VP (R&I) to the Recommendations of the Administrative Unit Review of the Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD)

The University has long recognized the importance of internationalization as a core component of its mission and programs. From the 1970s through to the early 1990s, an advisory group called the Group for International Development (GID) served the President. In the early 1990s the Associate Vice-President Research (and Dean of Graduate Studies), who reported to the Vice-President Academic, assumed the administration of international affairs. The AVPR served as the international liaison officer and the office worked closely with the International Student Affairs Office and Student Services, as well as with all of the faculties. In 1993, a research/international liaison officer was hired to assist the AVPR. The International Liaison Office (ILO) was then established to provide administrative support for international programs. In 1995, a five-person senior administrative committee met monthly to discuss strategies and policies related to international matters. This committee consisted of the Associate Vice-President (Research), the Associate Vice-President (Academic), Vice-President (Academic), Vice-President (Administration), and the President. In 1999 the position of the Vice-President Research (VPR) was created. The VPR also served as the International Liaison Officer assuming authority for the ILO. In 2002 the VPR portfolio was re-titled to Vice-President Research and International (VP R&I). In 2003, the International Liaison Office became part of the newly created Office of International Cooperation and Development (OICD) and in October 2003 a full-time Director was hired who assumed the International Liaison Officer role.

Over the years a number of discussion papers and reports have been prepared to help guide internationalization activities at the University. Major documents include:

Sagal, K. 1999. Policy Framework Discussion Paper for the Office of International Cooperation and Development.

Pickard, G. 2001. Office of International Co-Operation and Development Policy Document.

2003. Report of the Task Force on Internationalization.

Boutet, A. 2006. Integrating an International Perspective into the University of Regina Threefold Mission of Teaching, Research and Service.

Symes, L. 2007. Report on Increasing Internationalization at the University of Regina.

As part of the University's on-going process of periodic review of administrative and academic units, a Unit Review Team was formed in 2007 to review the mission, structure and operations of the OICD. Terms of reference were established for the Review Team that was mandated to examine four broad aspects of the OICD:

1. To appraise the role and key service processes of the UofR OICD and how these contribute to the University's strategic goals.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness and co-ordination of service structure, delivery processes including staffing, resources, activities planning, communication, training and development as well as service outcomes, including potential and existing client expectations and satisfaction.
3. To assess processes that insure consistency and reliability of services and areas of improvement, innovation and impediment.

4. To provide guidance and recommendations on improvements in any area of service or organizational structure that would be consistent and supportive of increasing the self-sufficiency of OICD activities and a desired growth in international programs and services.

The OICD produced a self-study document as background to assist the Review Team, and major documents on internationalization at the University were provided to them. The Review Team received written reports from various individuals and units and met with administrators and scholars in a two-day site visit as part of the review process.

In addition to the Unit Review of OICD being conducted in 2007, the University was in the process of searches for a new President and VP (Academic), both to be concluded in 2008. Under the direction of the acting President, an Ad Hoc Committee on Internationalization, consisting of all VPs, the AVPs Research and Student Affairs and the Director of OICD, was established to review internationalization activities at the strategic level within the University and prepare a briefing document for the new President. The OICD Unit Review Team was informed of this activity and that their report would inform the work of the Ad Hoc Committee. In addition, the University initiated two major planning exercises in 2007 that include consideration of internationalization. To address issues of enrolment in relation to student recruitment and retention (including international students), the University has undertaken the development of a Strategic Enrolment Management Plan that will be delivered in June 2008. The University has also been engaged in a major branding study to evaluate the University's reputation and profile and develop recommendations that will serve to better promote and enhance the University.

Thus, while the OICD unit review was intended to focus on one unit, the Unit Review Team expanded its consideration of internationalization to consider a broader context. The Review Team recognized that the issues and challenges facing the OICD were not unit specific but more at the level of the institution. They recognized that the development and implementation of international policy, programs and services is conducted within the University across a variety of academic and administrative units. In addition to the administrative support provided by the OICD under the VP (R&I), the AVP (Student Affairs), reporting to the VP (Academic) has responsibility for undergraduate international student admission and recruitment programs, including the International Student Success Office (ISSO). The Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research has responsibility for graduate international student programs and in 2007 created a portfolio for internationalization. The Deans, reporting to the VP (Academic) also manage international student activities within each of their faculties. English language training for international students falls under the Centre for Continuing Education that reports to the VP (Academic). International communications, international alumni and external relations are the responsibility of the Vice-President (External Relations).

While recognizing the need for and value provided by each of the University's international offices and programs, the Unit Review Team concluded that the University would benefit from:

- A coordinated vision and overall strategy for internationalization and policy development to support that vision; and

- Focused leadership in decision-making that would provide guidance with respect to allocation and integration of resources and the coordination and integration of international efforts on campus.

To those ends, the Review Team offered eight recommendations in their final report.

Recommendation 1: Create an Associate VP (International) position to lead and integrate the international portfolio at the UofR.

The Committee's view is that a senior dedicated position within the University reporting to the VP (Academic) will: (a) be able to more effectively lead an integrated, comprehensive and systematic approach that will increase the effectiveness in internationalization efforts and competitions; (b) have greater direct influence and have the authority to coordinate multidisciplinary programs, and to reduce confusion, duplication and perceived ineffectiveness of the University's international portfolio; and (c) enhance the University's overall reputation, helping the University to attract more funding, scholars and a higher caliber of students.

This recommendation concurs with that of Symes (2007). Given that a prospective AVP (International) would need to have a close working relationship with the AVP (Student Affairs), the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research on international academic matters, a direct reporting relationship to the VP (Academic) is logical.

This recommendation will be advanced to the Ad Hoc Committee on Internationalization for presentation in its report to the President. A central international office at the University requires the authority, responsibility and resources to appropriately coordinate and oversee international activities on behalf of the senior administration. The structural and budgetary implications of this recommendation will be examined as part of the University's budget process under the new VP (Academic).

Recommendation 2: Develop a single, cohesive vision and strategy that clearly articulates the UofR's goals of internationalization.

The Review Team found that the University has not yet developed and implemented a cohesive institutional internationalization strategy despite the various documents and reports with recommendations on internationalization that have been produced over the years. They recommend that the University establish a single, cohesive vision and strategy that clearly articulates the University's goals of internationalization, which should build on existing institutional strengths, identify gaps and provide a plan for moving forward in areas of international education, research, development and engagement. Specifically, three internationalization goals are recommended:

1. Strengthen global awareness through innovative programs and educational outreach
2. Increase international learning opportunities
3. Enhance U of R's reputation nationally and internationally

This recommendation is consistent with recommendations from Sagal (1999), the Task Force on Internationalization (2003), and Symes (2007). This recommendation will be advanced to the Ad

Hoc Committee on Internationalization for presentation in its report to the President. Given the current urgent emphasis on strategic enrolment management and student recruitment, this recommendation requires immediate action targeting one and two year actions targeted to the University's current needs.

Recommendation 3: Develop an institutional strategy for international student recruitment

The Review Team has concluded that: (a) the University does not have a set of clear goals and objectives for international student recruitment; (b) that there is a lack of coordinated effort at the institutional level when decisions are made on recruitment; and (c) while many offices have a role to play, not a single office assumes leadership and coordination.

This recommendation is consistent with recommendations from the Task Force on Internationalization (2003), Boutet (2006) and Symes (2007). It is also consistent with the preliminary findings of the University's Strategic Enrolment Management planning study that will present recommendations to address international student recruitment. The University Budget Committee for 2008-09 has removed international differential 2+2 program fees to allow the University to be more competitive in attracting international students.

Recommendation 4: Develop a comprehensive internationalization communications / marketing plan.

The Review Team has recommended an integrated approach to organize, highlight and share important information and knowledge of U of R's international activities, achievements, and opportunities with both the university and external communities. They conclude that a comprehensive internationalization communications and marketing plan will help engage others more effectively in profiling the University and attracting more students and opportunities.

Four action items are recommended to be included in the strategy:

1. Create a U of R International website, organized by functions rather than offices so that there is a unified image and it will be user friendly;
2. Create a U of R international marketing plan as part of the university branding exercise;
3. Create a U of R international database through an institutional inventory of all international activities and function areas; and
4. Develop effective communications materials that: (a) encourage the recruitment and retention of highly qualified students from around the world; and (b) promote the internationalization achievements and contributions of the faculty, staff and students both internally and externally.

This recommendation is consistent with recommendations from the Task Force on Internationalization (2003), Boutet (2006) and Symes (2007). It is also consistent with the preliminary findings of the University's Branding study.

This recommendation will be advanced to the Ad Hoc Committee on Internationalization for presentation in its report to the President. Work has already begun on the creation of the international database and work on the other three action items will take place in 2008-09

through cooperation among the VPs Academic, Administration, External Relations and Research and International.

Recommendation 5: Establish an integrated and coordinated organizational structure

Directly linked to the first recommendation, the Review Team recommends that the University establish centrally coordinated international services to support the diverse elements of internationalization under the leadership of an Associate Vice President (International). The Review Team has concluded that horizontal integration, connection, and communication of internationalization will provide coherent and comprehensive support to the international agenda of faculty, staff, students and external communities. While physical co-location of all international offices and activities is not essential, a more coherent and co-located appearance, as well as a clear organizational chart with reporting and working relations between different offices, will help the University reduce confusion as to who performs various functions, reduce the duplication of resources, and enhance the visibility and effectiveness of international services on campus.

This recommendation is consistent with Sagal (1999). This recommendation will be advanced to the Ad Hoc Committee on Internationalization for presentation in its report to the President. A working committee of the OICD, Student Affairs, the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research and the Centre for Continuing Education, in consultation with the Deans, will be formed to develop an operational plan for shared planning and decision-making in regard to administration of international programs and activities.

Recommendation 6: Ensure resources planning for sustainable internationalization

Faculties and administrative units have indicated that they are struggling to fund their international activities. The Review Team is of the view that income from international sources should be used to provide the needed institutional support to sustain University's internationalization activities. It recommends that the University establish a revenue re-distribution formula to allocate a fixed percentage of international income to support international services and activities, as well as to invest in the development of new opportunities.

All previous reviews of international activities at the University have recognized the need for adequate and appropriate funding support. The University does provide support to internationalization through resourcing to international research projects, OICD, ISSO, as well as its support for the 2 + 2 and 1+ 1 programs and other international programs. As earlier indicated, the Budget Committee has removed the differential international 2+2 program fee. The working group to be formed to address recommendation #5, in consultation with the Budget Committee, will also identify: (a) the components of a budget for institutional financial support of internationalization with mechanisms of budget control and monitoring; and (b) financial efficiencies that can be achieved through more effective operational integration.

Recommendation 7: Restructure international advisory committees

The Review Team recommends that the University revisit the mandates of its two institutional committees on internationalization (the President's International Committee; the International Communication Coordination Committee) and restructure them into advisory (external) and coordination (internal) functions. Specifically, a University Internationalization Advisory Board (UIAB) should be established to serve as advisor to the President and consist of senior university administrators and internationally oriented business, government and community leaders. Its functions would be to: (a) engage key business, government and community leaders in supporting the transformation of the University of Regina into one of Canada's leading international universities; and (b) provide advice on strategic planning for internationalization policy and activities of the University of Regina. In addition, a University Internationalization Coordination Council (UICC) should be established that is chaired by an Associate Vice-President (International) and composed of directors of various international offices and representatives from Deans' Council, external relations, UIAB, Student Union and key academics. The UICC would provide: (a) guidance and advice to the University's senior administration with respect to internationalization; (b) a forum for sharing of ideas, opportunities and best practices, and a forum for policy advice and input related to internationalization at the University; and (c) a forum for linking academic units and international offices in discussing new initiatives, reviewing existing programs, and identifying challenges and solutions.

This recommendation will be advanced to the Ad Hoc Committee on Internationalization for presentation in its report to the President. As the University moves to implement other recommendations of the Review Team, a reorientation and restructuring of current international committees, as appropriate, is a logical step. The current President's International Committee is very similar in intent to that described for the University Internationalization Advisory Board. It will be examined to insure that it is serving the University in the most appropriate and efficient ways. The need is recognized for a coordinating body such as the proposed UICC to provide advice on strategic policy and planning for international activities. With the agreement of the President, any necessary restructuring or modifications of committees can be initiated in 2008-09.

Recommendation 8: Strengthen relationships with government, private sector and communities

The Review Team recommends that the University seek better alignment between university international initiatives with the economic development goals of the city/province. One approach would be increased partnerships with internationally oriented businesses, NGOs, and community organizations. The University should take advantage of being located in the capital city, and build strategic alliances with the provincial ministries to address labor shortage and other urgent economic issues. International recruitment and skill training of foreign students and immigrants are some of the areas in which the University can play an important role in support of the provincial economic development strategy.

This recommendation is consistent with Symes (2007). The OICD is currently addressing improving government partnerships, as is the University Industry Liaison Office with business /

industry partners and various faculties that are actively engaged with numerous community partners. The Province is currently developing an international education strategy through the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (AEEL) and is working with the Universities and Colleges in identifying opportunities for cooperative work. As well, the University is engaging in discussions with Regional Colleges regarding potential partnerships to advance mutual international interests. The Office of the VP (R&I) has recommended that AEEL convene a conference of the provincial universities and colleges in 2008-09 to discuss the provincial strategy and ways in which the post-secondary institutions can better work with government to advance social and economic development goals through internationalization.