

**General Science Program Unit
Action Plan in Response to the External Review**

June 2014

Submitted by Dr. Amar Sodhi, Program Chair

General Science Action Plan

Action Plan

Preamble:

In conducting a review of the General Science program one needs to understand that the program was built on the utilization of courses already offered by Environmental Science, Mathematics and Physics and that no additional faculty were hired for the delivery of the program. Thus recommendations towards faculty research and scholarship and community service were not pertinent to the review. Furthermore the review committee made no recommendations on points other than those which reflect on the undergraduate program (2) with secondary consequences to faculty and staff (5) and plans, goals and resource allocation (9).

1. Undergraduate Program.

The Program Unit (unanimously) rejected Recommendation 1 (to no longer offer General Science) in favour of Recommendation 2 (continue to offer General Science, but no longer offer an Honour's option). The Unit believes that the general option of the degree is an academically sound broad based science degree which provides an option for students with minimal impact on resource allocation.

The Unit also plans to adopt Recommendation 2c (changes to the course options in the Chemistry stream) and will add first year Physics to the core requirements which partially addresses Recommendation 2f.

Actions to be taken:

Calendar Changes (from 2014-15 EDITION)

Delete 9.5 (reference to Honours) .

In 9.4 1(a) add Physics 1050 (or 1020), 1051 (or 1021)

In 9.4.2 change the Chemistry Stream course options to read: [Chem 1200](#), [Chem 1001](#), [Chem 2400](#), [Chem 2401](#), [Chem 2301](#), [Chem 2302](#) **or** [Chem 2210](#), **and two of:** [Envs 3210](#), [Envs 3211](#) or [Envs 4240](#).

To implement these changes, the required proposal will be sent, by the program Chair, to our Academic Studies Committee in time to meet Senate timelines for Calendar changes.

With regard to Recommendation 2f (a minimum of two courses taken within each stream):

The unit is in agreement that requiring 10 first year science courses would not strengthen the program as this would lead to an excess of first year level courses

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required for a degree. There is some merit in requiring first year physics as it is required as a pre-requisite for a core Chemistry course, so only students in the Math, Biology, Earth systems streams would not require physics. However, a student in the Earth systems stream would have a very restricted choice if first year physics was bypassed.

With regard to Recommendation 2a (re-introduce SCI 3000 and/or 3001 as courses required for the degree):

A narrow majority of the Program Unit were in favour that a course about science (or math) relevant to science students, but having no prerequisites be offered. This would have resource implications unless the Chair's remission is reduced. Also, unless the course is deemed a popular choice for non-GS majors then enrollment would be very low. Further discussions will be needed with the Head of Science and the AVP (Academic) to determine whether the implementation of this recommendation is feasible.

2. Faculty and Staff.

With regard to Recommendation 2e (Review which faculty members 'belong' to the program (though this would necessitate a discussion surrounding Appendix G of the MUN-MUNFA Collective Agreement)):

The unit was ambivalent to this, but said that a Chair should be retained to perform the required administrative duties. It was pointed out that the number of students who are "in the program" probably will ensure that the Chair still gets a two course remission making this issue of belonging moot with regards to freeing resources. Further discussions will be needed with the Head of Science and the AVP (Academic) to determine whether the implementation of this recommendation is feasible or desirable.

3. Other.

The review panel has suggested that the name of the program be changed. The Unit does not have an issue with this, but neither the review panel nor the Program Unit have thought of an alternative. Arguably our program is as much as a "General Science" program as the General Science programs at the University of Waterloo or Mount Royal University.

With regard to Recommendation 2d (Re-brand the program in a more 'honest' manner – it is essentially a training ground for Science teachers):

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It is more than that; like any other degree it serves for entry into professional programs or entry into fast-track nursing. There is no evidence that students are being misinformed about the program.

The Chair of the program should be, and is, willing to give advice to each student interested in the program to determine if it is best suited to their needs. Certainly, any student that desires to go to graduate school is advised to choose a program, either at Grenfell, St. John's or elsewhere, which facilitates this. Furthermore, the Chair should ensure that marketing and recruitment services portray the program in an accurate manner.

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Plan of Specific Action to be taken:

| Recommendations from the Review Panel Report | Summary of Unit Response to the Recommendations | Actions to be Taken |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Alignment with the University Strategic Plan | N/A | |
| 2. Undergraduate Program | see 1 | Calendar changes |
| 3. Graduate Program | N/A | |
| 4. Faculty Research and Scholarship | N/A | |
| 5. Faculty and Staff | see 2 | discussion |
| 6. Community Service | N/A | |
| 7. University Citizenship | N/A | |
| 8. University Support | N/A | |
| 9. Plans, Goals and Resource Allocation | see 1 and 2 | discussion |
| 10. Other | see 3 | discussion |