



# Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College

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## Anishinaabe Studies Department Program Review Executive Summary

Memo and summary to KBOCC Board of Regents  
July 10, 2023

### Introduction

In accordance with the KBOCC Academic Program Review process, this executive summary report provides a synthesis of internal evaluation and external review of the academic programs delivered by the Anishinaabe Studies Department and summarizes the significant strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for improvement and enhancement, as it sets out the recommendations that have been prioritized for implementation.

Throughout the 2022-23 academic year, the Anishinaabe Studies Department completed a self-study for the five-year review period of 2017-2022.

Sources of information in the self-study include program description, curricula, learning outcomes, faculty, instruction, and resources as well as analysis of data from various KBOCC offices (e.g., Registrar, Accounting, Assessment). A panel of five external reviewers, endorsed by the Assessment Committee, reviewed the self-study, participated in a virtual half-day meeting with KBOCC administration, Anishinaabe Studies Department, students and alumni and provided feedback and recommendations. Additional evaluation with recommendations was provided by the KBOCC Faculty Council, approved on May 22, 2023 (meeting minutes attached).

The Anishinaabe Studies Department is the fourth academic department to successfully complete the comprehensive review since initiation of the process at KBOCC in 2017-2018. Findings resulting from this process are described in this memo.

**Date of External Review:** March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**External Reviewers:** The primary feedback on the department's quality was provided by external reviewers, which included faculty and personnel from Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, Northern Michigan University's Center for Native American Studies, University of Puerto Rico, CSU Stanislaus, and KBIC's Eagle Radio.

Synthesizing these sources of information, key **strengths** and **opportunities** for the Anishinaabe Studies Department are summarized below.

### Strengths:

Although the resulting program review report emphasizes many opportunities for improvement, it also demonstrates the achievements of the department:

- **Mission & Relevancy:** The establishment of the program is a huge accomplishment and that students are graduating from the program should be applauded and celebrated. The Department should be commended for not only establishing a fine educational program, but for also creating a safe environment in which Native students from all nations can come and learn about who they are as Indigenous people. A holistic vision is evident with the existence of an Anishinaabe Advisory Committee and Anishinaabe cultural advisors. The way in which

culture, language and world-vision is organically integrated within the academic and administrative experiences sets the tone of truly living up to the mission and vision of KBOCC. The objectives of the department are aligned with KBOCC mission and vision. As a result, KBOCC is strengthened by the existence and work of Anishinaabe Studies. Feedback from previous and current students provided clear and compelling testimonials of integrating and applying knowledge in professional work.

- **Rigor/Quality:** In terms of learning outcomes the AS degree program is at the appropriate level of learning and rigor as a two year institution, and meets the needs of students as they build the foundational knowledge needed to achieve higher levels of learning. The Department has analyzed student learning using good assessment strategies and has used it to improve the program as well as identified needs and recommendations to support deeper and equitable outcomes by revising the course learning outcomes to match the rigor of the program learning outcomes.
- **Commitment to Student Success and Outcomes:** The Department demonstrates a strong commitment to students' outcomes. The Department has modest but consistent student enrollment with some fluctuation in retention and graduation over the review period. Considering the newness of the program and COVID challenges, the program appears to be moving ahead nicely with regards to retention and graduation. Students/alumni gave many examples of teaching effectiveness experienced in Anishinaabe Studies classes during Student Forum. The Department has adopted a series of noteworthy innovations and teachings through cultural integration. Moreover, the creation and use of student safe spaces and outer classroom attest to the commitment of this department with Anishinaabe language and culture preservation and revitalization. Outdoor and land based learning is both innovative, and in line with, educational models being developed by Native Studies Programs across Canada and the United States. The Department and KBOCC have taken great care in creating a community of support crucial to the population it serves. Both the department and KBOCC have a robust set of services that are more than adequate.
- **Continuous Improvement:** The reviewers commended the quality and comprehensiveness of the Department's review and self-study, which presents an impressive amount of data and evidence. The identified actions to address the barriers are both realistic and measurable such as the need for closing the assessment loop, the creation of a holistic advising approach, and community service and engagement to enhance student success and retention and the overall success of the program. The Department has a strong and bright future ahead.

#### **Areas for Growth:**

- **Curricular:** There is a need for greater inclusion of Anishinaabemowin language throughout curriculum and programs, improvements to teaching and learning through indigenized and community-based definitions of academic rigor, learning taxonomy/framework, instructional models and assessment/evaluation; and expanded course offerings that include global Indigenous perspectives and greater community engagement. Expanded partnerships and collaborative projects would provide additional support in these areas.
- **Tribal Management Certificate:** One of the main challenges the department faces is the difficulty of recruiting students for the tribal management certificate.
- **Staffing, Resources, and Collaboration:** With the current staff, the Department runs on the bare minimum to guarantee and maintain all the services it provides. The fact that the department chair is the only full-time teaching position is one of the biggest challenges that it faces. Currently, there is little time left to dedicate to outreach, collaboration, dissemination and other administrative activities that can help in giving the Department exposure within the

community. For now, the Department is not appropriately staffed to be consistent in fulfilling the overarching mission.

- **Advising and Academic Support:** Shifting to holistic advising that considers the whole person is not only adequate but much needed as academic success is often secondary to students other needs, or their own measure of success. Tutoring is available for general curriculum but not Anishinaabe Studies curriculum.
- **Facilities:** With the upward trend in enrollment they have identified the need for larger classroom space and/or additional course sections for courses with high enrollment.

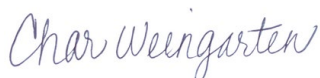
**Action Plan:** A plan for implementation is included on pp. 55-58 of the Final Report (attached) and a brief list of identified actions included below:

- Celebrate the Department and its accomplishments, with regular celebratory reach-outs to build and engage community.
- Conduct holistic strategic planning, considering necessary infrastructure and resources as well as strategies for growth and sustainability.
- Curricular revisions and mapping to strengthen academic rigor and apply values, language, and world views in instructional strategies.
- Refine student learning outcomes to reflect expectations for student performance with a greater emphasis on community service and engagement and community-based definitions of rigor and learning taxonomy.
- Refine and reframe assessment practices with a greater emphasis on “planting the seed”, engaging more authentic, culturally-relevant assessment, and more dialogue and professional development with program faculty.
- Collaborate with Student Services to implement holistic advising and Anishinaabe Studies-specific tutoring and academic supports.
- Implement evidence-based and culturally-relevant recruitment, retention, and persistence strategies.
- Invest in human resources by expanding and/or free up full-time faculty to assist with administrative, assessment, and community outreach duties as well as expanding course offerings.
- Strengthen promotion and outreach.
- Pursue external funding and collaborative projects.

## Conclusion

The academic program review process was a valuable experience for the Anishinaabe Studies Department and was made possible with assistance and support from the KBOCC administration, staff and faculty, and the grateful participation of external reviewers. The Department will maintain areas of strength and continue addressing areas for growth over the coming 5-year cycle. For final recommendations on the future of the Anishinaabe Studies Department, please see the attached KBOCC Faculty Council evaluation/recommendations and Program Review Final Report.

Respectfully submitted,




Char Weingarten  
Assessment/Accreditation Coordinator

## SIGNATURE PAGE FOR COMPLETED ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW (APR)

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Department Chair

  
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 Dean of Academic Affairs

  
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 President

**Department:** Anishinaabe Studies

**Program(s) of Study:** Associate of Arts (A.A.) in Anishinaabe Studies; Tribal Management Certificate

**Date of Review:** 03/09/2023

**Faculty Council Evaluation:**

Criteria	Rating			Comments	
<b>Ability to benefit and positively impact KBOCC and the wider community</b>	Exemplary/Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Holistic vision and integration of culture, language, and Anishinaabe worldview provides strong alignment to College mission and benefits to College. Partnerships and collaborations could be strengthened.
<b>Academic Rigor</b>	Exemplary/Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Learning outcomes and curricular goals appropriate for Associate's level, are consistent with TCU and other similar programs, and relevant to career and professional goals
<b>Student and alumni success</b>	Exemplary/Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Strong commitment to student supports and outcomes with strategic plans to improve retention, persistence, and completion and incorporate more holistic advising.
<b>Faculty</b>	Exemplary/Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Faculty are appropriate and adequately qualified and teaching loads are consistent. Too heavy reliance on Department Chair to provide administrative, assessment, and outreach duties means Department is not appropriately staffed to fulfill its mission. Recommend creating more permanent and full-time faculty positions and/or splitting with another department and adding more language teachers.
<b>Effective Instruction</b>	Exemplary/Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Teaching effectiveness demonstrated through student feedback, innovative instructional strategies, and strong instructional evaluation process.
<b>Facilities, Resources and Institutional Support</b>	Exemplary/Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Facilities and resources adequate; additional classroom facilities (or course sections) may be needed to support additional growth in enrollment
<b>Anishinaabe Culture</b>	Exemplary/Excellent	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Strong cultural integration and mission alignment, with plans to strengthen Anishinaabemowin language curriculum and revitalization.