



# Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College

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## Liberal 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 Liberal 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 Liberal 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 six external reviewers, endorsed by the Assessment Committee, reviewed the self-study, participated in a virtual half-day meeting with KBOCC administration, Liberal Studies Department, students and alumni and provided feedback and recommendations. Additional evaluation with recommendations was provided by the KBOCC Faculty Council, approved on May 24, 2023 (meeting minutes attached).

The Liberal Studies Department is the fifth 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 22, 2023

**External Reviewers:** The primary feedback on the department's quality was provided by external reviewers, which included faculty and personnel from Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA), Arizona State University, Northern Michigan University's Walking the Path Together, Leech Lake Tribal College, Michigan Department of Corrections (retired), and Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (CEO).

Synthesizing these sources of information, key **strengths** and **opportunities** for the Liberal 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:
- Broadness and diverse offerings, which is a strength in allowing the LS Department to provide different opportunities of study for students exploring multiple interests.
- The addition of the social sciences degree track/emphasis is an area of positive growth for the Department.

- Balance in maintaining the integrity and quality of each individual program and instruction according to the specific discipline, while still acting from the core of the overall department mission and the flexibility required for students to be successful in the changing program
- Small size leading to a sense of community and belonging by staff/faculty and students and the ability to "know" each student, considering the uniqueness of location and size of KBOCC student population, tribe and surrounding communities.
- The revival and expansion of the formal curriculum to include hands-on experiences as learning opportunities are exciting and appropriate for a liberal studies program. Experiential learning opportunities are engaging and helpful in preparing students to follow the three transfer tracks (transfer to: education, workforce, "being a good relative") to learning applicable skills and applying their learning from the classroom in a real life "work" setting and provides a unique opportunity for students at KBOCC to learn and become engaged citizens in their own community.
- Balance between financial constraints along with bringing in adjunct professors who are practitioners in the field.
- KBOCC does wonderful work of hiring relevant staff in their fields to instruct courses to students.
- Impressive supports and services available to ensure student success.

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

- The impact of staff turnover, changes, and decrease in number of faculty, while also simultaneously growing and expanding the Department, has been clearly reflected as a stressor and barrier to achieving some of the goals laid forth within the self-study, as a majority of responsibilities within the department and programs lies on one full-time Department Head and the support of a few other adjunct faculty and staff. The fact that the department chair is the only full-time teaching position is one of the biggest challenges and barriers that it faces to guaranteeing and maintaining all of the services it provides.
- Inequitable workload of Department Chair coordinating four degree emphasis programs, time-intensive advising and oversight of capstone projects, and administrative duties on top of full-time instruction. Establishing some sort of "Specialty/Concentration Advisor(s)" could help take some of the load off of the current Liberal Studies Department Chair, both in advising, experiential learning coordinating, and capstone teaching. A question would be, "How do we institutionalize this process to reduce the burden on the Chair while expanding the program to meet student needs?"
- A large reliance on adjunct instructors who have limited availability, involvement, and participation in Department functions.
- More internal work done on distinguishing and connecting those emphasizes to the department and larger college or community, particularly through the mission and PLOs. PLO's having one cultural learning.
- Societal trends and larger administrative/leadership climate have created difficulty in recruiting students in the LS - Criminal Justice degree track and certificate programs.

**Action Plan:** A plan for improvement is included on pp. 86-92 of the Final Report (attached) and a brief list of identified actions included below:

- Establish a clear vision, identity, and strategic directions for the Liberal Studies Department with an emphasis on connecting degree emphasis to the department and larger college or community and distinguishing from the General Education requirements, particularly through the mission and PLOs.

- Develop a strategic plan that addresses recruitment, enrollment, staffing, emphasis development, and pedagogy.
- Acknowledge and address the current inequitable division of labor amongst academic departments to create more equity amongst department chairs
- Invest in human resources: an additional full-time staff, emphasis advisor, and/or additional duties for an adjunct instructor to serve the growing programs, better serve students, and sustain Department Chair's full-time task loads. Increase full-time faculty to co-teach capstone courses. Support staff through professional development and wellness, job satisfaction, and work/life balance
- Revise the Corrections Certificate to reduce and broaden of PLOs
- Expand Criminal Justice courses and topics from corrections focus to broader criminal justice, political science, pre-law, and other related disciplines.
- Explore avenues to increase criminal justice enrollment through partnership with Baraga Correctional Facility and/or Marquette Branch Prison, distance learning, and marketing to MDOC employees
- Expand math curriculum/requirements to include quantitative reasoning and other transferrable math courses, eliminating option of two science labs.
- Refine Experiential Learning program to standardize requirements
- Alumni engagement and relationship development and graduate tracking
- Increase community outreach, partnerships with local stakeholders, and relationships with local universities
- Develop student focus groups to gather qualitative data on services and programs
- Develop a collaborative task force to address advising

## Conclusion

The academic program review process was a valuable experience for the Liberal 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 Liberal 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)

Vacant

Department Chair

*Hori Suman*

President

*Megan Hackya*  
Dean of Academic Affairs

**Department:** Anishinaabe Studies

**Program(s) of Study:** Associate of Arts (A.A.) in Liberal Studies, Liberal Studies - Art Emphasis, Liberal Studies - Criminal Justice Emphasis; Corrections Certificate

**Date of Review:** 03/22/2023

**Faculty Council Evaluation:**

Criteria	Rating				Comments
<b>Ability to benefit and positively impact KBOCC and the wider community</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	<b>Adequate</b>	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Department mission established but not widely disseminated. Recommend development of distinct missions and identities.
<b>Academic Rigor</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	<b>Adequate</b>	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Learning outcomes and curricular goals appropriate, although refinement to increase distinction and measurability is recommended.
<b>Student and alumni success</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	<b>Adequate</b>	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Strong commitment to student supports and outcomes with plans to establish standards for Experiential Learning and Capstone requirements, and enhance advising and alumni engagement.
<b>Faculty</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	<b>Adequate</b>	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Faculty are appropriate and adequately qualified. Department Chair load is inequitable compared to other academic departments.
<b>Effective Instruction</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	<b>Adequate</b>	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Teaching effectiveness demonstrated through student feedback, innovative instructional strategies, and instructional evaluation process.
<b>Facilities, Resources and Institutional Support</b>	<b>Exemplary/ Excellent</b>	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Excellent enhancements to facilities, particularly art program, has increased enrollment and growth in program.
<b>Anishinaabe Culture</b>	Exemplary/ Excellent	<b>Adequate</b>	Needs Improvement	Reduce or Phase-out	Enhance through creation of "Indigenous Liberal Studies" identity and development of program introductory course emphasizing Indigenous knowledge.