

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A. CONCLUSIONS

This Audit Team concludes that St. Lawrence College is well on its way to operationalizing an effective Quality Assurance (QA) process. The last year, in particular, has seen a dramatic change in the Administrative structure at S.L.C. coupled with a philosophical shift that re-aligns program and management accountabilities across the multi-campus structure. The Audit Team interviewed members of Senior Management, Academic Managers, Support Service Managers, faculty, students, and a faculty team that just recently completed a Formal Program Review (see Appendix A – Site Visit Agenda and Appendix B for list of Interviewees). The Team was most impressed by the apparent commitment by management to these new directions especially given the financial exigencies that exist.

As St. Lawrence College strives to set in place a comprehensive Quality Assurance process, two major component parts have been developed and implemented: the Annual Self Audit process and the cyclical Formal Program Review process. The Annual Self Audit, in effect now for approximately two years, provides a framework and mechanism for every program to undergo a regular review with an eye to identifying program achievements and to setting annual goals and subsequent action plans in place. The Formal Program Review, mandated to be completed by every program on a five-year cycle, sets out a comprehensive checklist of review criteria and incorporates input from a variety of internal and external sources.

As programs are identified for review, a Program Review Team is set in place largely comprised of faculty but including students, and Advisory Committee, graduate and employer representation. The review process is facilitated through the Office of the Manager, Academic and Research Services by an Academic Services Officer thus ensuring a level of support yielding consistency and continuity to the review process.

There is evidence that the Formal Review Process, though providing for comprehensive data collection and analysis, is still lacking in systems or practices that will ensure ultimate follow-through to the recommendations that are generated. This noted, there certainly appears to be a strong will to set these final QA component parts in place.

The Self Study undertaken by St. Lawrence was comprehensive and readily identified areas of strength and weakness. The Audit Team was grateful for the hospitality, responsiveness, and openness with which the visit was conducted.

The Audit Team was able to do a cursory tour of the Kingston Campus facilities and was impressed by the cleanliness and upkeep of the physical plant and the obvious first-class facility offered to the SLC students. Regrettably, the other two campuses (at Cornwall and Brockville) were not visited though the Team was able to interact with students and staff via the interactive V-Desk technology.

B. OVERALL FINDINGS OF PANEL

Criterion	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
Criterion 1	X		
Criterion 2	X		
Criterion 3		X	
Criterion 4	X		
Criterion 5		X	

C. COMMENDATIONS

The Audit Team makes the following commendations:

1. The assistive mechanism of using a process facilitator and of developing an adjunctive WebCT resource for the process is highly commended.
2. The systematic use of the KPI data in the Formal Program Review is seen as an excellent use of existing resources to augment the process.
- 3 The obvious commitment to this new QA process by management in the face of financial exigency and considerable turnover in administrative personnel is highly commended.

D. AFFIRMATIONS

The Audit Team affirms the following:

1. The Self Study (see Appendix F) was completed with considerable involvement by the college community and, as such, it was deemed comprehensive and representative.
2. The Self Study included candid notations of shortcomings or “Action Items”; this was very much appreciated and greatly assisted the Audit Team with its task.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit Team respectfully makes the following recommendations:

1. A Guidebook or Manual for the Self Audit process could be developed to assist teams or team members new to the process.
2. As the Formal Review Process evolves, it is recommended that mechanisms be set in place to ensure systematic follow up on recommendations.

3. The Formal Review Process checklist could be cross-indexed with relevant policies and formal procedures thus ensuring that the faculty review teams can readily turn to existing supportive documents for clarification.

4. The Formal Review Process checklist could, in subsequent iterations, be elaborated to include specific templates to generate a more consistent end product across the programs.

5. A mechanism to formally tie the annual Self Audits, and the results thereby generated, to the Formal Review Process could be considered.

6. Though an Orientation Handbook to the FRP is available through WebCT, a Faculty Mentor program (key individuals who have just completed an exemplary FRP could be assigned to guide those 'next in line') could be considered as a means of ensuring that all faculty members become well-versed or amply-skilled in meeting the program review expectations.

7. Though cursorily included presently, the Formal Review Process could more formally integrate the various Student Services KPI data, and other evidence of student support service effectiveness, into its checklist.

8. The existing Faculty Performance Review process could be reviewed with an eye to including some form of teacher observation component by academic managers and/or peers.