

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A. CONCLUSIONS

Sheridan has a complete set of quality assurance processes for its academic offerings and services. Although all these processes have not all been fully implemented, Sheridan is aware of what needs to be done to fully meet each specific requirement. Its self study was comprehensive and honest: it identified a number of challenges, and the audit team found no surprises as it probed issues with administrators, faculty and staff at all levels.

Sheridan can be proud of its long term commitment and investment in ensuring academic quality, having a focus on student success, and providing a positive learning environment (in all its many aspects). The audit team's suggestions focus on sustaining and completing what has been achieved, rather than changing anything.

The findings of this PQAPA are that Sheridan's efforts in establishing and implementing program quality assurance can be categorized as "**mature**".

B. OVERALL FINDINGS OF PANEL

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

C. COMMENDATIONS

There is much to commend at Sheridan, but there were several aspects of the audit that are worthy of particular mention.

The first is the comprehensive and effective academic governance model which is highly collegial and engages all levels of the organization from the students to the Board. This not only ensures wide acceptance and support of program related decisions, it is also a powerful mechanism for quality assurance as colleagues inspect, discuss and challenge each others' proposals and ideas. The resulting collective wisdom is always, in the long term, better and of higher quality than that generated only through "top-down" or opportunistic endeavor, and reflects Sheridan's evolution from a CAAT to an ITAL and provides a firm institutional culture for further development of its mandate. This governance model is worthy of sharing with the rest of the college system in Ontario.

The second feature to commend is the sheer depth and breadth of the commitment and attention to QA across the institution. We found evidence of this in the Registrar's Office, in the Student Advisement Centre, the Library, in Sheridan's approach to facilities and information technology, in its investment in institutional research, and how it approaches and actively deals with, for instance issues at the Davis campus, in mobile computing etc.

The existence of senior positions like the Dean of Academic Planning and Development and the Centre for Curriculum and Faculty Development also indicates the recognition of the need to support and resource the teaching and learning process.

The focus on student success and the desire to provide a positive student experience was evident from the Strategic Plan and in all interviews including faculty and students. This exemplary attitude was not as obvious in the written documents, but is clearly part of the day to day practice at Sheridan.

D. AFFIRMATIONS

The audit team affirms the "Challenges" section of the PQAPA self study in areas of:

- Sustaining its institutional culture of continuous quality improvement
- Completion of program/course mapping
- Ensuring consistency in annual program assessment reports
- Enabling better documentation and tracking of student appeals
- Providing PLAR leadership
- Consolidating management information systems
- Updating the Website
- Improving information on credit transfer/laddering
- Ensuring consistency of course across delivery methods.

The audit team found no other substantive challenges that were not identified.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Succession: With the retirement of the VP Academic (who has been a key leader in the development of the QA and academic governance systems), Sheridan needs to ensure that the current processes and plans to complete program review and mapping and the on-going investment in related faculty development are sustained.
- b) QA culture: Further to the point in D. above, while there is a notable consistency of understanding across Sheridan of the QA system, use of the common language and general awareness are not universal, and (as noted in the self study) there is a need for on-going diligence in ensuring the “institutional culture of continuous quality improvement” and what that means. Related to this, the team found some evidence of a lack of understanding in the use and interpretation of KPI and other data, which the new staffing in Institutional Research and the Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development (CCFD) should work on improving in the academic schools.
- c) Socio-cultural competency: knowing that Sheridan is a national leader in supporting the integration of immigrants, the team was surprised to hear from different sources that there is some lack of awareness of, and good practice in dealing with the increasingly diverse cultural diversity of its students. We have no doubt that Sheridan has the capacity to address this, and hopefully this recommendation will encourage Sheridan to explore this issue with all stakeholders.
- d) PLAR: the audit team heard of a new plan to assign responsibility for PLAR at Sheridan, which we strongly support and encourage. There are considerable opportunities for colleges and learners through the effective use of PLAR, and its potential has yet to be realized here and elsewhere. With its considerable progress in outcomes based learning and curriculum mapping, Sheridan is well positioned to advance this service, not just for course based PLAR, but program based as well.