



**DOUGLAS COLLEGE**

## **Program Review**

### **Youth Justice Worker Program**

**Faculty:** Child Family and Community Studies

**Dean:** Dr. Brian Thomas-Peter

**Associate Dean:** Gary Tennant

**Review Leader:** Doug Estergaard

**Completion Date:** June 13, 2013

## **Summary/Recommendations**

- Recommendation 1:** Replace CRIM 1170 Introduction to Corrections with CRIM 2255 Aboriginal Peoples: Crime and Administration of Justice.
- Recommendation 2:** Pursue negotiation of transfer into the proposed Douglas College Criminology Degree at the third year level for YJW Diploma graduates.
- Recommendation 3:** Pursue negotiation of broader transfer credit for CFCS and YJWD courses.
- Recommendation 4:** Initiate a recruitment campaign to create a higher public profile for the program.
- Recommendation 5:** Increase connections between admission officers and the programs they represent.
- Recommendation 6:** Develop a part time option for YJWD.
- Recommendation 7:** Keep student satisfaction under regular review.
- Recommendation 8:** Develop a clear career pathway from Youth Justice to employment in Policing or Probation, which may include affiliation to the Bachelor of Criminology at DC.
- Recommendation 9:** Develop of a succession plan.
- Recommendation 10:** Review YJW practica with the intention of delivering them in way that is comparable to other similar practica in CFCS.
- Recommendation 11:** Ensure planning of the CYCC intake arrangements includes consideration of the YJ Diploma.



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March 7, 2014

Dr. Kathy Denton  
Vice-President, Academic and Provost  
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Dear Dr. Denton:

### **External reviewer's report on the Youth Justice Worker Program (YJWP)**

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as an external reviewer for the YJWP program. I have read the program review document dated June 13, 2013 as well as other materials such as the curriculum guidelines. I have done my best to put fresh eyes on the review document, bearing in mind that people working at Douglas will be more familiar with specific aspects such as curriculum, course delivery, and faculty resources.

My general impression of this YJW program is positive. The architects of the YJWP were able to attract instructors from both Criminology and Child & Youth Care, allowing for a cross-disciplinary character that serves students well. The provision of a practicum placement in the first semester and again in the final semester is laudable, partly because it allows the new cohort of students to become familiar with the field early on, providing valuable experience for those who persist with the program and possibly giving a more concrete sense of the work for students who may not be well-suited to this particular program. Securing block transfer arrangements is another attractive aspect of the diploma, as is the mix of theory and practice in the youth field.

The retention figures are impressive, as are the enrolment figures with between 60 to 71 students enrolled each year from 2005 and 2012 (Table 4, page 6). The program also seems to fit with recent initiatives such as Community Connections and BCARIN (applied research and innovation) at Douglas.

<http://www.newwestnewsleader.com/business/204587591.html>

Specific recommendations listed in the review document are addressed one-by-one below. Following this, I make concluding comments and recommendations for the program.

### **Comments on recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** *Replace CRIM 1170 Introduction to Corrections with CRIM 2255 Aboriginal Peoples: Crime and Administration of Justice.*

I am unconvinced that CRIM 2255 should be dropped in order to offer CRIM 1170. Corrections is simply too vital a field for youth workers or other people working in criminal justice. It may be better to incorporate more Aboriginal/First Nations content into some existing courses than to pursue an either/or (2255 or 1170) strategy here.

**Recommendation 2:** *Pursue negotiation of transfer into the proposed Douglas College Criminology Degree at the third year level for YJW Diploma graduates.*

This arrangement for transfer credit would be a worthwhile option for YJWD graduates wishing to continue on to a degree at Douglas College. It is also in keeping with the principle of broadening transferability of post-secondary credits, where appropriate, to recognize students' accomplishments and provide for a smoother, less financially onerous transition into other programs at Douglas College or other postsecondary institutions. That said, care would be need to be taken to ensure that YJW diploma graduates had the requisite breadth in their coursework to facilitate transfer into further education such as a B.A. (see comment #3 of my concluding comments toward the end of this review).

**Recommendation 3:** *Pursue negotiation of broader transfer credit for CFCS and YJWD courses.*

Agreed.

**Recommendation 4:** *Initiate a recruitment campaign to create a higher public profile for the program.*

It would be helpful to establish a more dynamic presentation in online forums in order to highlight unique and appealing features of the YJWP.

**Recommendation 5:** *Increase connections between admission officers and the programs they represent.*

I agree. Also, in terms of continuity of advice and employee experience, it would be helpful if the high turnover of admission officers - as set out in the review document – could be stemmed.

**Recommendation 6:** *Develop a part time option for YJWD.*

This recommendation might need more justification as the current program is only two years long (4 terms) and it may be that a full-time, cohort-based program, complemented with faculty mentoring, is an excellent approach for students, faculty and for generally planning the course offerings and related resources. At the moment, it may be best to keep the existing full-time approach, especially given the high retention rate for recent intakes.

**Recommendation 7:** *Keep student satisfaction under regular review.*

Agreed.

**Recommendation 8:** *Develop a clear career pathway from Youth Justice to employment in Policing or Probation, which may include affiliation to the Bachelor of Criminology at DC.*

This seems like a very sensible approach. It would also be helpful to know if YPOs can expect to succeed in promotional competitions once they are employed by Police services, probation services, MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) and other agencies. This would add an important dimension to the measure not only of how many graduates become employed but also what they might expect in terms of career advancement and even the necessity of further education if they seek to advance into a managerial position, for instance.

**Recommendation 9:** *Develop[ment] of a succession plan.*

This is a crucial aspect of the future of the program. It may be that some late-career core instructors might be interested in a post-retirement arrangement whereby they teach on a part-time basis or serve as mentors. However, if they decide to remain fully retired, then hiring new instructors who are a good fit with the program curriculum and ethos is a high priority. With the retirement of Cynthia Fulton and the deployment of John Fleming to the Associate Dean position in Humanities and Social Sciences there are truly “big shoes” to fill. There is considerable intellectual talent in the lower mainland and adjacent areas and I am hopeful that these openings would be filled by some very capable new hires at Douglas College.

**Recommendation 10:** *Review YJW practica with the intention of delivering them in way that is comparable to other similar practica in CFCS.*

Agreed. Harmonizing these practicum arrangements makes very good sense and continues the stated tradition of interdepartmental co-operation for this program. Practicum I and Practicum II, while demanding considerable time and effort by faculty, seem invaluable for this kind of program.

**Recommendation 11:** *Ensure planning of the CYCC intake arrangements includes consideration of the YJ Diploma.*

I agree that there should be arrangements for YJ diploma graduates to enter the CYCC degree program. This could prove to be a popular route for diploma graduates.

### **Concluding comments by the reviewer**

1. At the risk of channeling author Lynn Truss (*Eats, Shoots and Leaves*), the 2013 review document should be carefully edited to correct problems with syntax and grammar, e.g. missing commas in several passages (“In addition, students who complete... p. 4) and a misplaced apostrophe (“Educator’s Consortium” should be “Educators’ Consortium”, I believe, see p. 4). In fact, after searching for this association, the correct name for this association appears to be The Child Care and Youth Care Association of BC, I believe [http://cycabc.com/?page\\_id=120](http://cycabc.com/?page_id=120) In fairness, the review document is informative and well-organized but it needs a careful edit to address these problems and add to the flow.
2. I have some concerns about the breadth of the curriculum. On the face of it, there do not seem to be courses that explicitly focus on ethics, for example, or on research methods. These two areas would be useful in their own right for students in the diploma program, in my opinion, and they would be very useful if not required for diploma graduates who wish to enter a degree program at Douglas or elsewhere.
3. It would be helpful to have access to YJWP instructors’ CVs and course syllabi for future program reviews. This would help to identify areas of potential overlap in the curriculum, for example, and to have a more detailed sense of course readings and assignments and of the instructors in the program. Providing such documentation could be onerous for Douglas faculty/staff and program reviewers alike, but it could be considered for future reviews.
4. It would be helpful to have an updated, more engaging webpage dedicated to this program. This redevelopment could include student testimonials, photographic images, and even a short video piece featuring students and instructors. It might be possible to enlist the skills and creativity of interested diploma students along with supportive faculty and IT services staff if this suggestion is implemented. It may be that Douglas College is

looking into enriching some existing online sites as there has been some very fresh and engaging imagery and information on the home page for DC and in newspaper advertisements.

5. Keeping with online resources, I recommend an updating of information in the curriculum guidelines section (the information appears to be about a decade old, e.g. “effective September 2004”).

<http://www.douglas.bc.ca/new-students/curriculum-guides/yjwd.html>

Key details such as currently-used textbooks and online readings could be provided through access to a recent course syllabus. As it stands, prospective students have rather general information that is not very helpful in my opinion. For example, with YJWD 1100, Personal and Professional Issues for the Youth Justice Worker, under the heading “Textbooks and materials to be Purchased by Students”, we are only told “To be announced”. In fairness, there is considerable detail that gives a sense of learning objectives and learning outcomes in the current guidelines but I wonder if some of this content needs to be modified to bring it in line with new content and new assessments, if necessary.

My overall assessment of the YJWP is quite positive. It has a strong legacy, fills an important niche in justice and social services, and has demonstrated sustained interest in consecutive intakes of students. Please feel free to follow up with me with any aspects of this review.

Yours sincerely,

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