RAPPORT D'ÉVALUATION FINAL / FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
Évaluation des programmes d'études supérieures / Evaluation of Graduate Programs
Providence School of Transformative Leadership and Spirituality
Cycle: 2018–2019
Date: January 16, 2020

I.   **Programmes évalués / Programs Evaluated**

- Master of Arts in Transformative Leadership and Spirituality (Major modification of Master of Pastoral Theology dated May 17, 2017)

II. **Processus d'évaluation / Evaluation Process** (description de la visite /outline of the visit)

- The Final Assessment Report for the evaluation of the aforementioned program(s) was based on the following documents: (a) the self-study brief produced by the academic unit, (b) the report produced by the two external evaluators following their site visit, and (c) the comments from the interim dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences, Lorraine Ste-Marie; the director of the School, Miriam Martin; and the vice-rector, academic and research, Jean-Marc Barrette; in response to the report mentioned in (b).

- During their visit, the external evaluators met with the vice-provost, academic affairs, Aline Germain-Rutherford; the vice-provost, graduate and postdoctoral studies, Claire Turenne-Sjolander; the rector of Saint Paul University, Chantal Beauvais; the interim dean of the Faculty of Human Sciences, Lorraine Ste-Marie; the vice-rector, academic and research, Jean-Marc Barrette; the director of the School, Miriam Martin; regular professors; members of support staff; and graduate students.

- Commentaires du délégué interne (études supérieures) / Comments from Internal Delegate (Graduate Studies)

  The site visit went smoothly. The external evaluators had a good understanding of the program and its delivery in the context of Saint Paul University. They met with all of the key persons who contribute to the quality and viability of the program, and they were satisfied with the answers to their questions.

III. **Sommaire des rapports sur la qualité des programmes / Summary of Reports on the Quality of Programs**

Cette section vise à souligner les forces et les défis soulevés dans le cadre du processus d'évaluation afin que l'unité puisse mieux identifier les occasions d'améliorer les programmes. / This section aims to inform the unit of the strengths and weaknesses observed during the evaluation process in order to improve its programs.

1. **MISE EN VALEUR DES FORCES ET IDENTIFICATION DES DÉFIS / EMPHASIZING STRENGTHS AND IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES**

- Only graduate program in Canada that combines leadership and spirituality.
- Dedicated, passionate, and knowledgeable faculty members.
- Teaching and evaluation methods are thoughtful and consistent with the learning objectives of the program.
- Hybrid nature of the program, which combines distance learning and residency periods, enables full-time students outside of Ottawa to enroll in the program.
- Broad definition of spirituality offers flexibility for different religions and beliefs and is responsive to modern leadership demands in a global context. The program aligns well with the mission and action plan for St Paul University and the strategic plan and mandate for the University of Ottawa.
- The program's learning objectives are clearly defined.
- The program has a very high social relevance, as demonstrated by employer and student feedback, who recognize the identity and mission of the program.
- The program is also at the heart of a new understanding of St-Paul University's mission and identity.

DÉFIS / CHALLENGES

- Hybrid nature of the program is both a strength and a challenge as local and out of region students would appreciate a better sense of connection between students.
- Small faculty numbers present challenges for succession planning.
- Wide applicability of program and varied career options is a strength but it also makes it challenging for the program to devise student recruitment strategies.
- An increased visibility of the program among employers and potential students is necessary to ensure the growth of the program, and to facilitate students' career advancement.
- Maintain a strong interdisciplinary structure and network, which also involves a strong network of collaborators and partners.
- The hybrid format requires the most up-to-date technology to enhance the learning experience in light of two different profiles of student cohorts (new students and mature students).
- Development of a mechanism that will ensure a better understanding of students' trajectory and their level of success after graduation.
- Promote programs opportunities for bilingual learning regarding some components of students' experience.

2. OBJECTIFS DU PROGRAMME / PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- The proposal for the major modification to the original program has addressed meticulously the program learning outcomes, which have helped define the new curriculum and mode of delivery. As the program faces the challenge of enhancing the sense of belonging to a community among local and distant learners, the development of innovative teaching and evaluation methods based on discipline specific PLO will favour the growth of the program as well as the coherence of its curriculum. [Recommendation 1]

3. **CURSUS ET STRUCTURE / CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE**

- As stated by the external evaluators, "while there are sufficient core graduate courses within the school, there is an opportunity to enhance the curriculum by allowing students to focus on different electives which might come from others schools at Saint Paul or perhaps even from University of Ottawa (e.g., School of Social Innovation, Telfer School of Management). Current electives provide study of ecology and indigenous studies, as specific means toward which society can be transformed; elective coursework from other schools might broaden the social system components of the program, including attention to include the dramatic changes in economics, politics, and technology that characterize today's society." The Unit's response shows that caution is required regarding the expansion of the optional courses list which could have a negative impact on the number of students enrolled in each course. [Recommendation 2]

4. **ENSEIGNEMENT, APPRENTISSAGE ET ÉVALUATION / TEACHING, LEARNING AND EVALUATION METHODS**

- The hybrid delivery mode is both a strength—as it allows for the participation of highly motivated students who would not be able to attend classes—and a challenge—as it limits the ability of students to interact spontaneously and develop a sense of belonging to a community of learning. In that perspective, appropriate and high-performance technology, as well as technical support, is a necessity in order to innovate and improve the learning experience. Both Faculty and Unit have already identified means to improve the program delivery and have collected positive feedback from students regarding the new technology. [Recommendation 3]

5. **EXPÉRIENCE ÉTUDIANTE ET GOUVERNANCE / STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND GOVERNANCE**

- As noted by the Faculty and the unit, this process was unusual as it was meant to assess a brand new two-year program for which very little data is yet available, but has turned out to be a good opportunity for reflection and adjustments, especially regarding the mode of delivery and the professorial recruitment strategy. As suggested by the external evaluators, there is also an opportunity to implement a mechanism that will allow for an appropriate assessment of students' trajectory in a program in which most students are already employed. In order for the program to demonstrate the relevance of the program for students' skills development and consequential career advancement, the Unit will need to develop a mechanism that tracks students' success and evolving needs as the program gains maturity. [Recommendation 4]
- As every new program (content and title), the challenge is to reach all potential new students, based on a thorough understanding of their ideal profiles. Students who are admitted in the program can provide key information about their professional origins and goals, but also about potential employers. Because the success of the program and its future growth will be ensured by its demonstrated capacity to develop sought after skills, it will be strategic to inform all potential employers about the program learning outcomes. There are some actions to be taken to ensure a better visibility of the program and easy access to admission pathway, but other initiatives related to the curriculum such as partnerships, experiential learning activities could also have a

positive impact on the visibility of the program. [Recommendation 5]

6. **ESPACES ET RESSOURCES / RESOURCES**

● The fact that the program is unique is a strength that poses a challenge for the development of a hiring plan, at least until the combined expertises of leadership and spirituality are well established and develop further elsewhere in Canada. The need for a strategic plan based on program learning outcomes and on the values of the program is very important and will be crucial to ensure the viability of the program beyond some foreseeable retirements. [Recommendation 6]

IV. **Améliorations aux programmes / Program Improvement**

Les programmes ici évalués sont conformes aux exigences de la discipline. Les recommandations suivantes visent à maintenir ou à améliorer le niveau de qualité déjà avéré des programmes. / The programs under evaluation are in conformity with the standards of the discipline. The following recommendations aim at maintaining or increasing the level of quality already achieved by the programs.

OBJECTIFS DU PROGRAMME, RÉSULTATS D'APPRENTISSAGE, MANDAT ET PLAN SCOLAIRE DE L'UNIVERSITÉ / PROGRAM OBJECTIVES, LEARNING OUTCOMES, MANDATE AND UNIVERSITY PLAN

Recommendation 1 : The GPEC recommends that the unit continues to explore innovative teaching and evaluation methods to support a greater sense of a learning community among distance and local students.

CURSUS ET STRUCTURE DU PROGRAMME / CURRICULUM AND STRUCTURE

Recommendation 2: The GPEC recommends that the program consider enhancing the elective options with courses from other programs and schools if the student cohort is large enough to do so without undermining student numbers in the courses offered by the program.

ENSEIGNEMENT ET ÉVALUATION / TEACHING AND EVALUATION

Recommendation 3: The GPEC recommends that the program continue to explore technologies that will facilitate accessible and user-friendly online connections to support the hybrid teaching model.

EXPÉRIENCE ÉTUDIANTE ET GOUVERNANCE / STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND GOVERNANCE

Recommendation 4: The GPEC recommends that the unit develops a mechanism to collect data regarding students' trajectory through the program and after graduation.

Recommendation 5: The GPEC recommends that the unit create a marketing plan for increased program visibility among potential students and employers which will benefit recruitment and program promotion, including a school website and targeted advertising.

ESPACE ET RESSOURCES / RESOURCES

Recommendation 6: The GPEC recommends the program continue to develop succession plans to account for upcoming faculty retirements, aligned with future opportunities and which will ensure the maintenance of interdisciplinary collaboration.

V. **Énumérer la liste des cours non offerts depuis plus de trois ans et les raisons / List of courses not offered for more than three years and the reasons**

Recommendation 7 : The GPEC recommends that the unit keeps an up-to-date list of all courses that cannot be offered at least once every three years, and prepares a revision of its course offering to be included in the progress report at mid-cycle.

VI. **Conclusion**

The external evaluators have underlined the changing landscape of theological education in North America in general, and have commended the initiative taken by the School of Transformative Leadership and Spirituality for redesigning its curriculum in light of the cultural evolution. The present quality of the program results from a wide consultation of all potential stakeholders, including the students.

The program is well resourced, unique in its leadership and spirituality orientation, and is offered through a hybrid mode of delivery that reaches its targeted student population. The program has already generated significant interest from the students, and employers that were consulted have confirmed the renewed relevance of the program.

The main challenge of the program will be to ensure its visibility among potential students and employers, as the updated program learning outcomes need to be presented and promoted. The hybrid mode of delivery, which ensures the accessibility of the program among students that are already employed, also requires a continuous assessment of its pedagogical components, technological support and impact on student's sense of belonging to a learning community. The broad understanding of "spirituality" that governs the structure and the content of the program, presented as both a strength and a challenge by the external evaluators, should also remain a key element of future discussion on the orientation of the program.

The GPEC members wish to congratulate the School of Transformative Leadership and Spirituality for a successful quality assessment process.

Calendrier et échéances / Schedule and Timelines

The Office of Quality Assurance will schedule a meeting with program officials and the Faculty Dean's Office following receipt of this report in order to prepare an action plan and to set timelines for each recommendation. A progress report outlining actions taken and results obtained will be submitted to the GPEC at a date to be established when the action plan is finalized.

The next self-assessment cycle will take place in 2026–2027, with the self-study brief to be submitted by June 15, 2026.