

French Studies, Undergraduate, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

Cyclical Program Review – 2004 – 2012

Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

Reported to Joint-Committee on Quality Assurance: April 15, 2015

Program description:

One of the original departments of York University, the Department of French Studies offers an interdisciplinary set of courses in the three curricular areas of French language, linguistics and literature. In addition to Honours BA, the International BA (IBA) and BA degree programs, the Department of French Studies offers Certificates of Language Proficiency in Basic French, Intermediate French and Advanced French either in general French language proficiency or with a focus on business.

Program	Accepts 2013	Enrolment FTES 2013	Degrees Awarded 2013
BA – Major 1, Major 2, Minor - 358	44	195	BA Hon – 25; BA – 8; Certificates - 26

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

François Paré, Professor, Department of French Studies, University of Waterloo
 Douglas Walker, Professor Emeritus, Department of French, Spanish, and Italian, University of Calgary
 Douglas Freake, Associate Professor, Department of English/Humanities, York University

Site Visit: January 30-February 1, 2013

Outcome: The Joint-Committee on Quality Assurance concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations. Follow-up report due **October 2016**.

Program Strengths:

- The program serves French majors/minors and provides courses to non-majors, including courses with a business focus and a certificate in French Language Proficiency.
- Language courses are very strong and provide a cultural perspective, and there is a commitment to ongoing improvement as evident in a Strategic Vision Document from 2010 that seeks ways to facilitate course selection, identify paths towards timely program completion and enhance value of study abroad opportunities.
- Curriculum in 3 distinct areas of Language, Literature and Linguistic is interesting, diverse and rich, includes an international BA and prepares students well for graduate level study.
- Students appreciate high quality teaching, the Multimedia Language Centre and language assistants from Bordeaux as well as the diversity of offerings, noting, however, constraints on availability of courses at senior levels in all 3



streams.

- Research profile in professorial stream is strong.
- There is room to increase the number of majors served, and the unit is committed to developing the program to serve the wide array of student backgrounds and motivations. Collaboration with other programs, in addition to the Faculty of Education and Schulich, are being explored.

Opportunities for Program improvement (selected from self-study and reviewers' report):

- A more learner-centred approach would permit more clarity on program expectations and transition from introductory courses to upper-level study. The review report identifies issue of the high number of preparatory courses required for entry to the major and recommends replacing some 6-credit courses with 3-credit courses.
- Students enjoy experiential learning, and the program would be enhanced by more opportunities.
- Curriculum mapping to course level expectations in upper year levels needs to be completed to provide stronger sense of sequencing and progressive skill development.
- Increased summer offerings would serve students' needs.
- The visibility of French Studies could be heightened; the web site needs improvement.
- There are opportunities for stronger collaboration between Keele and Glendon in the areas of curriculum and scheduling coordination, adoption of a single placement test that includes an oral component, more active promotion of each other's activities and offerings, and enriching faculty complement through joint appointments.
- The review report notes that "when bridges are established, the combined French course offerings on the Keele and Glendon campuses...would clearly outperform any other French program in Canada in terms of the sheer number and variety of courses offered."
- The review report identified unevenness in the research profiles of faculty members and recommended strengthening the research culture of the unit. In its response, the unit pointed out that alternate stream faculty members do not have research responsibilities. Currently 60% the affiliated faculty members are professorial with research responsibilities and this accounts for the appearance of uneven contributions.
- The lack of space for graduate students at the Keele campus is a concern for both the undergraduate and the graduate program.

Decanal Implementation Plan (selected):

The decanal implementation addresses recommendations that surface throughout the report as well as those summarized at the end and reflects the unit's response. Priorities are summarized with timelines as follows:

- The plan supports efforts to deepen collaboration with Glendon to enhance student mobility and increase course offerings in both programs (particularly

in the Summer term), to harmonize courses, particularly at 1000 and 2000 year levels, and to harmonize faculty complement renewal. Progress will be included in the October 2016 follow-up report. The Dean's Office offers assistance in room allocations and scheduling and is supportive of development of formal or informal collaborations in governance and notes that university planning processes that may provide broader recommendations.

- In addition, the Dean's Office supports the possibility of a common placement test and will work with the Principal of Glendon College to ensure a process for considering improvements across the two programs. The plan anticipates completing this project by Summer/Fall 2016. (Note: the outcome of this recommendation may change after a discussion with the Principal of Glendon.)
- In terms of research, the DIP points out that the level of research productivity is close to or on par with analogous units, that the most recent Chair undertook to revitalize the unit's research culture, and that all professorial appointments are now expected to present research programs and to be eligible to Graduate Studies appointment immediately or soon after taking up a full-time appointment.
- There is a project underway to improve all web sites at LAPS that is facilitated by pan-university improvements, and plans are in place to adapt faculty to a new architecture. The plan assumes that the French Studies web site will be enhanced to reflect proposed increased coordination between the two programs. The project is expected to be completed by Summer/Fall 2016.
- The Dean's Office has been encouraging units to reduce program complexity and notes the efforts underway within the department to improve student progress through the program. The plan proposes alternatives to the recommendation that some 6-credit courses be replaced by 3-credit courses given recent experience in another language program and expects results to be in place by Summer/Fall 2016.
- The plan notes established interfaculty initiatives with Glendon, Education and Schulich and is encouraged by recent discussions to develop new initiatives within LAPS, notably with Public Policy and Administration and the School of Administration Studies, as well as with the Lassonde School of Engineering. The October 2016 follow-up report will provide an update on such initiatives.
- The plan notes that experiential learning has been enhanced by the recent YorkU-Abroad course at Chambéry and that the work the Department has been doing with the Associate Dean Teaching & Learning sets the course for further and ongoing development in this area.
- The Office of the Dean acknowledges the space shortages and the effect this has on the undergraduate and graduate programs alike in terms of graduate student offices. A Faculty-wide space plan is in place to address this issue in the long term, and an update will be provided in the October 2016 follow-up report.

Summary:

Undergraduate French Studies at Keele is distinguished by the strength of its program in three distinct areas, language, literature, and linguistics, and students are required to attain significant language proficiency and specialize in either of the other areas. Moreover, the program serves non-majors very well and is attentive to the diversity of interests,

motivations, and proficiency levels that students bring to French Studies. Many of the recommendations concerning curriculum development and improvements to the student experience have been in the process of implementation as part of the unit's general planning and the preparation of the self-study, and the decanal implementation plan provides structure and support for several initiatives. A significant proportion of faculty members are actively engaged in research and supports are in place to enhance research activity. An emphasis on opportunities to enhance the program's visibility and sustainability by way of deepened coordination and collaboration with Glendon has been embraced as key to the realization of the potential of French Studies at York in general and at Keele to increase the number of its majors and enhance the reputation of its offerings at the undergraduate as well as graduate levels. This DIP does not address recommendations relating to the MA program, also reviewed as part of the Cyclical Program Review; however, Vice-Dean Michasiw has reviewed the review report and has addressed the issue of graduate student space in his DIP.

Alice J Pitt, Vice-Provost Academic
April 2015

