

York University

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

LAW AND SOCIETY

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

Law and Society, Department of Social Science

Cyclical Program Review – 2008 to 2015

This Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the programs listed below.

Program(s) Reviewed

Honours BA Program (Single Major), Law and Society
Honours Double Major BA Program (Unlinked), Law and Society
Honours Double Major Linked Interdisciplinary BA, Law and Society
Honours (Major/Minor) BA Program, Law and Society
General Certificate, Law and Society

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Dr. Gillian Balfour, Associate Professor, Sociology, Trent University
Dr. Bryan Hogeveen, Associate Professor, Sociology, University of Alberta
Dr. Aaron Lorenz, Dean, School of Social Science and Human Service, Ramapo College of New Jersey
Dr. Sonia Lawrence, Associate Dean, Research, Director Graduate Law Program, Director Institute for Feminist Legal Studies, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones

Cyclical Program Review Launch: September 2015
Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: September 1, 2016
Date of the Site Visit: October 18-19 2016
Review Report received: December 16, 2016
Program Response received: June 9, 2017
Dean's Response received: May 2018

Implementation Plan and FAR confirmed by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance, May 2018

Submitted by Alice Pitt, Vice-Provost Academic, York University



This review was conducted under the York University Quality Assurance Protocol, August 2013.

Outcome:

An implementation plan has been approved that addresses the recommendations.

The Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance concurred with the recommendation of the Vice-Provost Academic that a post-CPR review involving the Department of Social Science is required in light of the departmental omnibus statement and the Dean's statement on departmental challenges. The outcomes of this departmental review, which will be undertaken collaboratively with the Office of the Vice-Provost, the Office of the Dean of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and the Department, will form part of the 18 month program Follow-up Report for Law and Society as well as other programs housed in the Department. The Follow-up Report will provide an update on specific aspects of the implementation plan resulting from the cyclical program review as well as any further recommendations or action plans made in consideration of the Departmental Review.

The Follow-up Report will be due 18 months after the review of this report by the York University Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance (January 2020).

The next Cyclical Program Review will begin in the Fall of 2023 with a site visit expected in the Fall of 2024 or Winter of 2025.

Program Description and Strengths:

The Law and Society Self-Study document describes the program this way, "As a pioneering program and current innovator in the field of interdisciplinary socio-legal studies, Law & Society was one of the first undergraduate programs in North America centered on law, not as a vocational or professional concern, but as an object of critical interdisciplinary inquiry. It has been recognized as one of the oldest and best known such programs in North America. Originally a linked program degree in 1974, it has evolved from this to a stand-alone program in 2004."

The reviewers noted in their report that, "The curriculum is simultaneously classic and innovative," and demonstrates innovative and cutting-edge approaches to the study of law and society. The report states, "...the LASO faculty display intellectual openness and critical engagement in both their teaching and scholarship."

Implementation Plan

Recommendation 1: Hire a field placement coordinator. It appears that there is a gap between input and output, particularly with field experiences. A field placement coordinator could close this gap and the right candidate could work on both LASO and CRIM, as well as related graduate programs.

With related programs in Social Science, the program will submit a request, with rationale, for a placement co-ordinator to the Dean's Office.

Fall 2018

Recommendation 2: Create a digital pamphlet for dissemination on the major. A traditional hard-cover pamphlet is possible as well but a digital one makes more sense in contemporary times.

No action required: the program has responded to the recommendation.

Recommendation 3: Further articulate program goals. Whether approached from an outcome perspective or otherwise, it might prove beneficial for the faculty to elaborate upon its expectations for majors.

The program has articulated its program expectations in relation to the OCAV DLE framework and has mapped these to the program offerings and aligned with learning outcomes and assessments. The Joint Subcommittee on Quality Assurance (JSCQA) notes that the learning outcomes are quite general and that the sole objective for 4th year courses is preparation for graduate level study. The JSCQA agrees with the Dean's recommendation that this review report recommendation be addressed by the program. The program will plan a retreat for the purpose of further articulating and broadening the program's goals and report on the outcomes to the Department of Social Science and the Dean's Office.

Fall 2018 for retreat; March 30 2019 for report

Recommendation 4: Greater efforts should be made in the area of faculty development. We recommend continued administrative support for attendance and participation through grants, travel awards, and conference stipends.

No action required: the dean's response identifies opportunities available to the faculty.

Recommendation 5: Highlight a LASO student group.

No action required: the program has addressed the recommendation and will provide an update in the 18-month follow-up report

Recommendation 6: Develop a first year seminar style course (1000-level) for Law and Society majors. This might alleviate some of the concerns of first-year students.

The program will reflect on the suggestion, using a class-size of 50 as its model, and, in light of the outcomes of efforts to further articulate goals of the program (see recommendation 3), propose changes to the first year curriculum (and beyond) with implications for resources. A report will be provided to the Dean's Office.

Fall 2018 retreat; March 30 2019 report to Dean's Office

Recommendation 7: Outline and explain the role of the Undergraduate Program Director. It appears that the UPD holds arbitrary "power" and this unilateral "power" is both inconsistently wielded and without accountability.

The Department of Social Science will investigate the reasons behind this recommendation and, if necessary, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the UPD in Departmental governance documents and develop individual and/or group orientation procedures for new UPD's and co-ordinators if necessary.

Fall 2018

Recommendation 8: Is there a way in which the University can better support Unit 2 faculty? We are unsure if there is an answer to this but we are obliged to ask the question.

No action required: this is an ongoing concern for the University and will be addressed.

Ongoing

Recommendation 9: Connect undergraduate club related to major with Alumni Association to build a bond between the two that might allow for mentor/mentee relationships to develop.

Vice Provost Academic, on behalf of all Faculties to resume discussion with Alumni Affairs in order to advance collaborative efforts to track graduating students and seek their input on their York experience.

Recommendation 10: Create innovative ways, possibly e-books, with the Library to facilitate exploration

Program, along with other Social Science programs, to meet with Librarians to explore co-development of an initiative, perhaps to culminate in an Academic Innovation Fund proposal.
Fall 2018

Recommendation 11: Incorporate more formal experiential learning into the course, possible in the form of some kind of required course enrichment component necessary in every class. In consultation with the LA&PS Experiential Learning Co-ordinator, the program will develop an experiential learning plan.

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