


CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW COMMITTEE (CPRC) FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SOCIOLOGY BA

DEGREE PROGRAMS BEING REVIEWED	BA Sociology
EXTERNAL REVIEWERS	Dr. Tracey Adams, Western University Dr. Vic Satzewich, McMaster University
INTERNAL REPRESENTATIVE	Dr. Torben Drewes, ECON, Trent University
YEAR OF REVIEW	2016-2017
DATE OF SITE VISIT	March 1 & 2, 2017
DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT BY SOCI	October 1, 2018
DATE OF NEXT CYCLICAL REVIEW	2025-2026
DATE PREPARED BY CPRC	October 18, 2017
DATE APPROVED BY PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC	October 24, 2017
SIGNATURE OF PROVOST & VP ACADEMIC	

The Bachelor of Arts in Sociology program is rooted in the social sciences and is inspired by a passion for social justice. Built on a core of required courses in: theory, research methods and hands on experience, the sociology program uses its interdisciplinarity to give students a personalized and unique experience. Student experience is further enhanced by a strong, collegial department, and as reviewers' commented on, 'outstanding faculty committed to teaching and learning.' The program engages students in understanding and acting on the consequences of social change. Students acquire first hand professional experience working with experts in the fields of aging, law, medicine, popular culture and sexuality.

The program provides students with a social "tool kit" of concepts, theories, research skills and factual information which enables them to think critically and understand diverse cultures, social

experiences, dynamics of power and inequality, and global changes that forge relations between individuals, groups, institutions and societies.

SUMMARY OF PROCESS

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the BA Sociology program underwent a review. Two arm's-length external reviewers (Dr. Tracey Adams, Western University and Dr. Vic Satzewich, McMaster University) and one internal member (Dr. Torben Drewes, Economics, Trent University) were invited to review the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the University on March 1st and 2nd, 2017.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR), in accordance with Trent University's Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP), provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the undergraduate degree program. The report considers four evaluation documents: the Program's Self-Study, the External Reviewers' Report, the Program Response, and the Decanal Response.

A summary of the review process is as follows: the academic unit(s) completed a self-study which addressed all components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent's IQAP. Appendices included: Curriculum Vitae; Course Syllabi; Learning Outcomes; Enrolment, Retention and Student Data; Calendar Copy; University Degree Requirements; TUFA Collective Agreement; and Student Surveys. Qualified external reviewers were invited to conduct a review of the program which involved a review of all relevant documentation (self-study, appendices, IQAP) in advance of the site visit. A two-day site visit took place where reviewers met with senior administration, faculty, and students.

Once the external reviewers' report was received both the Program and Dean provided responses to the report. The Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC) reviewed and assessed the quality of the degree programs based on the four review documents and reports on significant program strengths, opportunities for improvement and enhancement, and the implementation of recommendations.

The Implementation Plan identifies those recommendations selected for implementation and specifies: proposed follow-up, who is responsible for leading the follow-up, and the specific timeline for addressing the recommendation, if applicable. Academic units, in consultation with the respective Dean(s), will submit an Implementation Report in response to the recommendations identified for follow-up. The Report is due October 1, 2018.

SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM STRENGTHS

- The Sociology program demonstrates significant innovations and creativity in both curriculum and program delivery.
- Courses have a interdisciplinarity focus, creating a unique and specialized experience for each student.
- Reviewers were impressed with the extent of experiential learning incorporated into courses through undergraduate theses, research practicums, and community projects.

- The faculty members in the Sociology Department are highly productive scholars who are well connected to the broader research community and to various community-based groups and organizations. Faculty members provide students with a strong community/classroom balance.
- The reviewers noted that faculty are ‘remarkably committed to teaching, pedagogical innovation, and student support’, helping to create an enhanced student experience.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

- The program should develop a strategy to generate student interest in 4000-level research courses.
- The program should consider reducing the number of required 4000 level courses to align more closely with other Sociology departments across Canada.
- The program should consider re-labeling existing opportunities as ‘experiential learning’ and ensure students are aware of all opportunities; better publicity.

COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

That course offerings be reviewed to optimize use of existing faculty resources, with consideration be given to narrowing the program’s focus.

Program Response

We have already been discussing whether our curriculum can be narrowed given the lack of resources. One model is to create specializations for all of our offerings, with a core specialization in theory and methods, and to restructure our focus on social inequalities and social justice issues into more visible specializations. We recognize that our students have diverse interests and aspirations after graduation; however, while accommodating those vocationally orientated students, we still seek to support those students who wish to pursue academically rich programming.

Decanal Response

The Department should continue to refine its curriculum, to develop new program options that align with student interests, and to identify staffing resource needs to support all students. Enrolment growth will be supported by the necessary instructional resources.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That course offerings at the Trent and Durham campuses be differentiated to fit faculty specializations on each campus, and different student interests.

Core offerings would be consistent across both campuses. The Peterborough campus could continue to provide courses to support its specializations, faculty interests, and discipline breadth whereas the Durham campus should likely offer a narrower range of courses, including courses that blend with other program offerings at Durham.

Program Response

We are committed to differentiation between the two campuses, provided there are adequate resources to offer a full degree in Durham that provides breadth for students in that program.

Decanal Response

The Chair should continue to work with the Head of Trent Durham to ensure that course offerings best leverage faculty expertise, and that instructional resourcing is sufficient to support Sociology.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That Options (clusters of courses) be developed.

Durham campus appears to be considering the development of 'options' that would allow students to take a cluster of courses from several departments in a linked area (for example law and society). These options would likely benefit Sociology at Durham.

Program Response

The current Legal Studies Option in Durham, as well as the Child and Youth program have developed externally from our department's own curricular plan. We have committed to delivering courses aligned with these program areas starting in 2017-2018.

Decanal Response

The Chair should work with the Head of Durham to develop curriculum, and to determine resource and personnel requirements.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That students be provided with further hands-on exposure in conducting research by offering a half course in methodology at the 2000-level and an upper-year methodology course.

Program Response

This is a useful recommendation that may allow us to stagger research methods across the degree program. We are committed to reviewing the instructional design of methods courses offered at other universities.

Decanal Response

Dean is in agreement. Chair and Department should work towards developing this recommended change.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That the Program take steps to enhance student retention, including:

- **Consider allowing students who do not achieve 60% in SOCI 1001H and 1002H to take 2000-level courses with the option of re-entering the major if they can improve their grades**
- **Encourage students to pursue related specializations and options**
- **Reduce scheduling conflicts with courses offered in programs in which Sociology students often double-major.**

Program Response

We will be reviewing enrollment and retention data through-out the next 24 months to assess program innovations. As well, the new Law and Arts program has seen a significant number of applications for direct entry into Sociology. We also expect that some BSW students will choose Sociology as their major if they are not successful in meeting third-year requirements. The program is committed to developing an enriched stream for those students who are identified by faculty as candidates for graduate school.

Since the self-study was written, the University no longer requires a minimum of 60% at the first-year level as a university degree requirement.

To the best of our knowledge there were no conflicts on the Symons campus. Synchronized timetabling across different degree programs is challenging for cross listed courses.

Decanal Response

The popularity of the Law & Arts program, along with new the new specialization in Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies, should continue to attract students into Sociology. Removal of the 60% requirements in the 1st-year Sociology courses and the provision of additional staffing resources at the 1st-year level should help with retention. Chair should continue to work with Dean to identify and implement additional steps to improve retention.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the program ensure all instructors hold suitable qualifications to provide the expertise and student support required.

The hiring of non-sociology instructors ought to be discouraged, or at least monitored closely by both the Durham administration and the department head at the Peterborough campus. If there are no suitably qualified applicants for certain courses, those courses ought to be cancelled rather than offering students an instructor with limited expertise in the discipline.

Program Response

The program is committed to the recruitment of academics with suitable qualifications with expertise in the research and teaching in substantive areas as well as core courses. The program is limited by the CUPE Collective Agreement which sets out rights to claim courses and ROFR processes. Under the terms of the TUFA Collective Agreement, only the Dean can cancel courses due to low-enrolment for TUFA members. As we move towards a greater number of contract faculty positions (CUPE) as well as online learning, the Executive is developing new ROFR procedures, in consultation with other departments and universities to ensure best practices.

Decanal Response

The Chair should continue to work with the Department Executive and the Dean to develop staffing plans that assign to CUPE those courses that can be filled by highly qualified, part-time instructors, while respecting the teaching preferences of full-time faculty. RoFR criteria are under development, as required by the CUPE collective agreement.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That the Program consider the benefits of the Applied Criminology specialization.

Criminology tends to be popular, and the department's establishment of an Applied Criminology Specialization could raise enrolment numbers. However, it is not clear the department has the resources to support such a program. The department ought to have a better articulation of what it means by, and what it hopes to accomplish with, its Applied Criminology specialization. Successful implementation of this specialization could require increased resources; however, this investment could benefit not only the department, but the entire university.

Program Response

Since completion of the self-study and the visit of the external reviewers, the Specialization is now entitled Criminology and Socio-legal Studies, and two new courses have been approved, Crime and Society (SOCI 2615) and Legal Research Methods (SOCI 4111). Depending on enrollment patterns, we are being encouraged to move ahead with an interdisciplinary degree in Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies that brings together departments from the Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Decanal Response

The Dean is in agreement that a successful specialization in Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies will benefit the Department, the Social Sciences division, and the University. Resources to support the specialization will be based on enrolments.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That the program review the number of courses offered at the 4000-level; there may be a need to reduce and/or rotate course offerings.

Program Response

The program will undertake a comprehensive assessment of the prerequisites for year 4 courses and consider if they can be aligned with entry for students at year 3 or 4, in order to increase choice whilst narrowing overall options and how this affects degree requirements. We will reduce the number of 4th year courses to 1-1.5 and review which courses would be appropriate for reallocation from 4th year to 3rd year.

Decanal Response

The Chair should continue to work with the Dean to consider reducing the number of 4th-year courses in any given year, and to rotate courses so as to minimize the extent to which such a reduction will reduce student options.

RECOMMENDATION 9

That the program review 4000-level offerings in order to attract student interest.

Thesis and practicum options at the fourth year are wonderful opportunities for students that few embrace. Students may perceive these courses as methods-focused and hence less attractive.

Program Response

The program should survey the students as recommended and also plan how to market these courses as a logical culmination to our core specialization but with an ability to study specific issues that interest students. The program will also consider whether to make these courses required as part of the restructuring of the methods progression as one way of reframing their relevance.

Decanal Response

Dean is in agreement. A survey of student perceptions would be useful. Overall, the University is committed to expanding experiential learning opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 10

That courses listed in the academic calendar accurately reflect current course offerings in the program.

Program Response

This has been part of an on-going strategy but we will commit to clearing out courses once the strategic narrowing of our curriculum is decided, so that offerings in the calendar reflect a more realistic choice for students.

Decanal Response

Dean is in agreement. Calendar copy should more accurately reflect current course offerings.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That the program considers different, smaller-scale opportunities for community-engaged and experiential learning, provided university-level supports are in place.

Program Response

Our annual departmental retreat (Fall 2017) will be devoted to establishing a work plan to accomplish these tasks.

Decanal Response

Dean is in agreement. Chair should work with Dean to ensure adequate support for these initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 12

That the university create an office to help facilitate community-engaged and experiential learning opportunities.

Program Response

This recommendation falls out of the purview of the department however we would strongly support a deeper connection with the Centre for Community Based Education that is more directly linked to our department's strengths.

Decanal Response

The University is committed to expanding experiential learning opportunities for our students.

RECOMMENDATION 13

That the program market and label existing opportunities available within courses as experiential learning, and publicize these as opportunities to apply knowledge in practical ways in order to appeal to students.

Program Response

We recognise that our recruitment profile needs to adapt to address this issue and we have been developing new materials during the course of the review. Once we have narrowed our curriculum and made the pathways through the degree more visible, we feel that we can produce appropriate and more effective marketing materials for students.

Decanal Response

The University's review of experiential learning is addressing this issue.

RECOMMENDATION 14

That the program continues its efforts to market sociology as a degree that leads to a variety of careers and provides students with practical skills.

Program Response

We recognise that our recruitment profile needs to adapt to address this issue and we have been developing new materials during the course of the review. Once we have narrowed our curriculum and made the pathways through the degree more visible, we feel that we can produce appropriate and more effective marketing materials for students.

Decanal Response

The Dean fully supports these efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 15

That the University focus on overall retention and conduct institutional-level analysis.

Program Response

This recommendation is beyond the purview of the Department.

Decanal Response

The University is committed to studying the factors which influence student retention, with an aim to improving both the quality of our students' experiences and our rates of student retention.

RECOMMENDATION 16

That reinvestment in an SPSS site-license be considered to enhance job-relevant skills for students in social sciences.

Program Response

We support this recommendation and also encourage Trent University to consider re-investing in an SPSS site-license. Students would benefit from having access to this software, particularly in SOCI 3160 and experiential learning opportunities such as fourth year theses.

Decanal Response

The University has site licenses for other widely-used statistical analysis software packages, including MAPLE, MATHEMATICA, STATA and STATISTICA. Other packages, including R, are widely-used and freely available.

RECOMMENDATION 17

That recruitment materials reflect the program's commitment to university priorities.

Program Response

This is something that the program would like to pursue with our marketing partners but also recognize they are not directed by individual departments. The program worked closely with Marketing and Communications this year to improve our website, and has made significant changes to improve its visibility.

Decanal Response

In its recruitment efforts, the University will continue to emphasize the many strengths of our faculty in Sociology and in other units.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The applicable Dean, in consultation with the Department Chair/Director of the relevant Academic Unit shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The Reporting Date for submitting a follow-up Implementation Report is indicated below and is the responsibility of the Academic Unit in consultation with the Dean.

DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT: October 1, 2018

The Implementation Report should be submitted to the applicable Dean(s) who will then forward the Report to the Office of the Provost.

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up <i>If no follow-up is recommended, please clearly indicate 'No follow up report is required' and provide rationale.</i> <i>Indicate specific timeline for completion or addressing recommendation if different than Due Date for Implementation Report</i>	Position Responsible for Leading Follow-up
<p>CURRICULUM-RELATED</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 1</u> That course offerings be reviewed to optimize use of existing faculty resources. That the program considers narrowing the program's focus.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 2</u> That course offerings at the Trent and Durham campuses be differentiated to fit faculty specializations on each campus, and different student interests.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 4</u> That students be provided with further hands-on exposure in conducting research by offering a half course in methodology at the 2000-level and an upper-year methodology course.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 8</u> That the program review the number of courses offered at the 4000-level; there may be a need to reduce and/or rotate course offerings.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 9</u> That the program review 4000-level offerings in order to attract student interest.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 10</u> That courses listed in the academic calendar accurately reflect current course offerings in the program.</p>	<p>Program to provide update.</p>	<p>Chair in consultation with Dean-Social Sciences and Head-Trent Durham</p>

<p><u>RECOMMENDATION 3</u> That Options (clusters of courses) be developed.</p>	<p>No follow-up is required. The BA Sociology is under review; Options fall outside the requirements of the BA degree program.</p>	
<p><u>RETENTION</u></p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 5</u> That the Program take some steps to enhance student retention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider allowing students who did not achieve a 60% in SOCI 1001H and 1002H to take 2000-level courses with the option of re-entering the major if they can improve their grades. Encourage students to pursue related specializations and options. Reduce scheduling conflicts with courses offered in departments in which Sociology students often double-major. <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 15</u> That the University focus on overall retention and conduct institutional-level analysis.</p>	<p>No follow-up is required. The University is committed to retention at both the university and program levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The University has removed the requirement for a minimum grade of 60% in a required introductory course, however, it is noted that the university requirement remains that students will still only be allowed a maximum of 1.0 credit with a D grade in courses in their major. Not relevant to the quality of the program. Program commented that it had been aware of an issue in Durham, however views this as an anomaly. 	
<p><u>RECOMMENDATION 6</u> That the program ensure all instructors hold suitable qualifications to provide the expertise and student support required.</p>	<p>Program to report back on best practices to be implemented in 2017-2018.</p>	<p>Chair in consultation with Dean-Social Science and Head-Durham</p>
<p><u>RECOMMENDATION 7</u> That the Program consider the benefits of the Applied Criminology specialization.</p>	<p>No follow-up is required. A Specialization in Criminology and Socio-legal Studies has been approved, and is now available to students in the Sociology program.</p>	
<p><u>EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING</u></p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 11</u> That the program considers different, smaller-scale opportunities for community-engaged and experiential learning, provided university-level supports are in place.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 12</u> That the university create an office to help facilitate community-engaged and experiential learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Provide update on experiential learning within the program.</p> <p>No follow-up is required. In response to the review of Co-op, Career Services and Experiential Learning, an Interim Director has been hired to oversee experiential learning at Trent University</p>	<p>Chair in consultation with Interim Director, Co-op, Careers & Experiential Learning</p>

<p><u>RECOMMENDATION 13</u> That the program market and label existing opportunities available within courses as experiential learning, and publicize these as opportunities to apply knowledge in practical ways in order to appeal to students.</p>	<p>and will oversee the creation of a centralized structure.</p> <p>Update to be provided.</p>	
<p><u>RECOMMENDATION 14</u> That the program continues its efforts to market sociology as a degree that leads to a variety of careers and provides students with practical skills.</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 17</u> That recruitment materials reflect the program's commitment to university priorities.</p>	<p>No follow-up is required. Program response provided details of recent activities, including: new marketing/recruitment materials, unique display boards, liaising with recruitment staff, and improvements to website.</p> <p>No follow-up is required. Program has been working closely with Marketing and Communications, and has made significant changes to improve its visibility.</p>	
<p><u>RECOMMENDATION 16</u> That reinvestment in an SPSS site-license be considered to enhance job-relevant skills for students in social sciences.</p>	<p>No follow-up required. Statistical analysis software currently in place is comparable.</p>	