



**Final Assessment Report  
Academic Review**

**Labour Studies**

**A. Summary**

1. The Centre's self-study was considered and approved by the Academic Review Committee on October 4, 2010.
2. The review committee consisted of two external reviewers: Bob Bruno (University of Illinois) and Wayne Lewchuk (McMaster University), and an internal reviewer, David Fancy (Dramatic Arts).
3. The site visit occurred on December 1-3, 2010.
4. The reviewers report was received on January 4, 2011.
5. The Centre's response was provided on February 2, 2011.
6. The decanal response was received from Dean Dunk on March 16, 2011.

The academic programs offered by the Centre for Labour Studies which were examined as part of this review include:

- Labour Studies and Economics
- Labour Studies and History
- Labour Studies and Political Science
- Labour Studies and Sociology
- Certificate in Labour Studies
- Concentration in Labour Studies

It should be noted that the review commenced under the terms and conditions of Section III: 20 of the Faculty Handbook which pertained in 2009-2010 and concluded under the revised terms which were approved by Senate on May 16, 2010.

## **B. Strengths of the Program**

The Centre for Labour Studies and its programs fit in the trans disciplinary spaces articulated in the integrated academic plan. Specific strengths include:

- Interdisciplinarity – programs are structured to ensure that students will acquire an understanding of Labour Studies as an interdisciplinary endeavor
- Pedagogical Methods - most course formats continue the commitment to the seminar system with a focus on academic writing
- Faculty Resources – a broad range of faculty members contribute to the program through cross-listed course offerings providing students with access to instructors from a great variety of areas of specialization.
- Relationship with the local labour community – collaborative relationships with local and regional labour organizations provide opportunities for Centre members (faculty and students) to participate in the community and its activities.
- Student Bursaries - value of bursaries available to Labour Studies students is among the highest per capita in the University, as a result of the fundraising efforts of the Program Committee

Following the previous review, then Director Dr. June Corman, was given a mandate to put the Centre on a sounder footing including evaluating the curriculum, increasing enrollments and engaging the local labour community. Since 2003:

- The curriculum has been significantly redesigned;
- A fourth year co-major with History has been added;
- Most Labour Studies courses have been cross-listed with other department offerings, resulting in an increase in FTEs;
- A number of courses from other departments have been cross-listed with Labour studies to expand the range of courses available and to make Labour Studies more attractive to students;
- Articulation agreements have been signed with Mohawk and George Brown colleges; and,
- New core courses have been introduced.

These efforts have been successful in attracting new student enrollments within its courses and program. Beginning in the 2011-2012 academic year students will have the option of completing a single major honours or pass program in Labour Studies.

Although it was requested, the reviewers did not provide a recommended outcome category for the Centre.

### C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

The Reviewer's report contained a total of 32 specific recommendations covering seven broad areas (see Appendix I). In its response to the Reviewer's Report, the Centre did not specifically address each of the individual reviewer's recommendations but, rather, grouped the recommendations into broader categories (I through VI below). These categories are used below with specific reviewer's recommendations identified by number. The Decanal response is aligned with the Centre's broad categories, and as a result, this section follows that pattern.

#### I. Enhancing the Research Profile of the Labour Studies.

**2.2. Recommendation: Consideration should be given to creating and providing infrastructure support for a "Labour Studies Centre Research Consortium" (merely a suggested name) that could conduct theoretical and policy-oriented research. This can help build the profile of the research activities of the Centre for Labour Studies by drawing attention to the Labour related research being generated by members of the program committee and others home outside the Centre.**

**2.3. Recommendation: Establish a schedule of public presentations (e.g., once a month on a Friday) on research work authored by Labour Studies and Program Committee faculty. Students should be encouraged to attend and the time of the presentations should provide opportunities for student participation.**

**2.4. Recommendation: Once a calendar of presentations is arranged, it should be broadly promoted by the Faculty of Social Science.**

**4.3. Recommendation: Increase number of guest speakers to expose students to materials and individuals outside of more traditional learning formats.**

**6.1. Recommendation: As suggested above, further engagement could include the establishment of a research centre dedicated to local economic development issues and a capstone course that gives students an opportunity to be involved with local labour organizations.**

The above recommendations have been addressed by the program to enhance the research profile of the Centre for Labour Studies. The Centre is proposing the establishment of the Jobs and Justice Research Unit (JJRU) to help foster and showcase Labour Studies research. The Dean has committed seed funding in support of establishing the Jobs for Justice Research Unit, which has been established.

ARC considers that these recommendations have been accepted and are in the process of implementation.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Centre
Responsible for resources:	Centre and Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Centre Director
Timeline:	Director to report by December, 2012.

## II. Faculty Resources for Labour Studies

**2.1. Recommendation: The decanal administration, by its own formula, accepts that Labour Studies is first in line in the faculty for more faculty resources. The reviewers recognize that there are specific values to be accrued from either 100% appointments or cross-appointments to the Centre. The reviewers suggest that at least 2 (two) additional tenure-track positions. Although cross-appointments have the advantage of increasing the number of faculty directly involved in Labour Studies while recognizing current funding issues, as well as promoting interdisciplinary vitality, if the possibility for a full appointment arises, the kind of presence this could provide the Centre would of course also be very valuable. Appointments should add discipline, research interest, skill set, geographical and demographic diversity to the Centre. Recognizing popular cross-listed courses, along with incumbent co-majors and potentially dynamic new co-majors should also be relevant criteria in filling academic appointments.**

The Centre applauds the Reviewer's recommendation that the Center needs "at least 2 additional tenure track positions."

In his response, Dean Dunk states: "The reviewers are correct to point out that by a formula developed in the Faculty of Social Sciences in 2004, Labour Studies is the most poorly resourced unit in the Faculty in terms of full-time positions. However, that formula is only one of the variables considered in decisions about resource allocation." The Dean also recognizes that a program cannot exist on a lone cross-appointed faculty member and is dedicated to looking for ways to increase full-time faculty complement in the Centre. The difficulty lies in finding opportunities to make such an appointment in a constrained budgetary environment. For 2011-2012 a LTA has been assigned to the Centre. A search is currently underway for a full-time tenure-stream position in Labour Studies commencing July 1, 2012.

ARC notes that the larger issue of allocating faculty resources to contribute to trans-disciplinary programs needs further consideration across the university but that in the meantime the Faculty is looking at creative ways of addressing this concern.

**Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Dean and Provost/VP, Academic

Responsible for resources: Dean and Provost/VP, Academic

Responsible for implementation: Dean

Timeline: Dean to report by December, 2012.

### III. Attracting and Engaging Labour Studies Students

**2.6. Recommendation: To promote increased interest in the Labour Studies major and to highlight the importance of labour/work related scholarship the Centre should look for ways to publicly promote undergraduate student scholarship, research interest and practical experience. A student forum each semester could be arranged with special recognition from the Dean of Social Sciences.**

**2.7. Recommendation: Creating a Labour Studies student group should be encouraged - among other reasons - to demonstrate the validity of pursuing an academic career focused around ideas derived from work, workplace and labour force research.**

**4.2. Recommendation: Explore ways of facilitating a student culture of collective engagement with learning such as approaching some students to develop a Student Association.**

**7.3. Recommendation: Involve Labour Studies students on the Centre's Program Committee.**

In response to the above recommendations, the Centre has developed a plan to increase the participation of students in the Centre, through identifying a mechanism for student participation on the Program Committee, forming a student association and the use of social media to communicate with students.

The Dean is fully supportive of the Centre's initiatives to enhance engagement with students, as is ARC.

#### **Implementation Plan (First Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Centre
Responsible for resources:	Centre
Responsible for implementation:	Centre Director
Timeline:	Director to report by December, 2012.

IV. Curricular and Pedagogical Issues in Labour Studies

**3.1. Recommendation: The Centre should develop and require that all Labour Studies students take a Labour History course. The course could be offered on a half-year basis or as a full year. A full year course could be roughly divided into a pre and post period format with the second half focused on contemporary labour history.**

**3.2. Recommendation: Courses identified as “core” should be created with a clear understanding of how they build towards a coherent Labour Studies major.**

**3.3. Recommendation: Future core/elective courses should consider addressing labour in a particular part of the world. For example, areas could include South America, Asia, or the Euro Zone. Such a course(s) will provide students with a multi-national and international perspective and open up advanced areas of future study.**

**3.4. Recommendation: Courses cross-listed need to be culled for labour relevance and labour content. The following is a very incomplete list of courses that should be examined: “Canadian Economic Issues,” “Economic Geography,” “Introduction to Public Administration,” “State and Economic Life,” “Gender Practices of Resistance,” “Masculinity and Economy.”**

**3.5. Recommendation: The Centre should consider offering selected core courses in the evening and weekends on a rotating basis.**

**3.6. Recommendation: To insure that learning objectives are being properly addressed every cross-listed and core course syllabus should include a section that references anticipated student competencies.**

**3.10. Recommendation: Consider developing a co-op option for eventual new majors. This could assist with recruitment, retention, and also provide important experiential learning opportunities for students in workplace and internship settings. Recommendation: Consider splitting the first year course to give more students a chance to experience LS in their first year so they can major in year two. With a full year course, students must commit to the first year course in September. This likely leads to some potential LS students failing to find out about the program before September of year two by which time they are less likely to see Labour Studies as a potential major. This needs to be done keeping in mind that the decision to offer a year long year course was based on concerns that students were dropping out of the second half of the course because term one focused on history.**



**4.1. Recommendation: Approach the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Educational Technologies to make a presentation to the Program Committee with a view to providing a space within the committee's regular course of affairs to discuss issues of teaching and its role in the Centre's development.**

**5.1 Recommendation: The Library staff is very interested in helping the Labour Studies faculty, and the faculty should seriously consider taking up this offer.**

The Centre's program Committee will meet to consider and evaluate the reviewer's recommendations dealing with curriculum and pedagogy. Actions taken by the Program committee to date include:

- i. Requiring the cross-listed Canadian Labour History course (LABR 3P75) for Labour Studies majors or re-arranging the content of LABR 1F90 to infuse more labour history. (3.1)
- ii. Reviewing core courses and new course proposals with a view to reaching a common understanding of how they build towards a coherent Labour Studies major (3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6)
- iii. Exploring a co-op option once the single major is in place (3.7)

The Dean is in support of the actions being taken by the Centre with regards to curricular and pedagogical issues arising from the review.

In ARC's view, the essential recommendation is that the Centre undertake a comprehensive review of its curriculum and the Centre has accepted that recommendation and has commenced that review.

#### **Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Centre
Responsible for resources:	Centre
Responsible for implementation:	Centre Director
Timeline:	Director to report by end of the 2012-13 academic year.

V. Labour Studies Program Committee

**4.4. Recommendation: Involve more Program Committee members in core teaching and advising.**

**7.2. Recommendation: Explore the potentials and benefits of having the Director, administrative assistant, and the cross-appointed Faculty member have offices closer to one another.**

These recommendations relate to the assigning of resources (human, physical and financial) to inter-departmental units at Brock and the relationship of these resources to a 'home' unit. Inter-departmental sharing capacity between units/centres regarding workload (teaching, research and service) and the impact that such arrangements would have on the home department requires that decisions are made such that the viability of the home department is maintained.

With respect to governance, ARC recognizes and acknowledges the issues around interdisciplinarity and the sharing capacity between units/centres regarding workload – teaching/research and service and the impact on the home department. However, these transcend the unit and Faculty level and are best addressed at the institutional level.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Provost/VP, Academic
Responsible for resources:	Provost/VP, Academic and Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Dean
Timeline:	Dean to report by end of the 2012-13 academic year.

**7.1. Recommendation: That a retreat be organized with the Program Committee during which possibilities for a new administrative/service model be elaborated. Reflecting the Centre’s move away from a self-described ‘survival stage’ into a more sustainable period, a new administrative/service model will distribute certain tasks more widely so as to provide the Director and the cross-appointed Faculty member with more support. Distributed tasks could include organizing speakers or university student fairs, teaching cross-listed courses, and community outreach.**

While this recommendation (the organization of as retreat) was not specifically addressed by either the Centre or the Dean, ARC understands that a retreat will occur.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Centre and Dean
Responsible for resources:	Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Centre
Timeline:	Dean to report by end of the 2012-13 academic year.

VI. Labour Studies and Brock's Strategic Plan

**1.1. Recommendation: That the Centre for Labour Studies rapidly pursue the call for the development of a Strategic Plan as outlined in Section III of the December 1, 2010 Brock University Integrated Plan document in order to benefit from any leadership possibilities to be gained from responding quickly to such an invitation.**

**1.2. Recommendation: It is evident that a number of different understandings of notions of interdisciplinarity (or in fact multi-, trans-, or post-disciplinarity) are in circulation at Brock University. During the process of the curricular review suggested below, consultation with the Program Committee to determine a working definition of interdisciplinarity that can help govern and stimulate the Centre's activities.**

**1.3. Recommendation: Closely examine the various interdisciplinary "spaces for innovation" proposed in the Brock University Integrated Plan document to determine which of these relate to the Centre's activities (economic and social sustainability, globalized contexts, social justice and equity issues, among others). Develop short and long-term strategies for communicating these resonances and intersections to relevant senior administrators, to other academics outside of the Centre working in these areas, and for developing the Centre's foci on these "spaces for innovation" where relevant.**

The Centre for Labour Studies will continue to support the University's strategic focus on interdisciplinarity. It is pursuing the development of new co-majors programs with Sport Management and Geography.

The Dean recognizes that Labour Studies is one of the many examples within Social Sciences (and beyond) of Brock's support for interdisciplinary programming.

**Implementation Plan (Second Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Centre
Responsible for resources:	Centre
Responsible for implementation:	Centre Director
Timeline:	Director to report by end of the 2012-13 academic year.

## **D. Recommendations to be Implemented**

The IQAP requires ARC “set out and prioritize the recommendations that are selected for implementation.” Using the specific proposals enunciated above, the following priorities are proposed.

### **First Priority:**

- 2.1 - two new tenure track appointments –the Dean has provided clarification regarding the situation and process
- 2.2 – provision of infrastructure support for a “Labour Studies Research Consortium”
- 2.3 – establish a schedule of public presentations
- 2.4 – promote schedule of presentations to Faculty of Social Sciences
- 2.6 – student engagement
- 2.7 – create Labour Studies student group
- 4.2 – facilitating student culture of collective engagement
- 4.3 – increase number of guest speakers
- 6.1 – establishment of a capstone course that might include involvement with local labour organizations
- 7.3 – involve Labour Studies students in program committee

### **Second Priority:**

- 1.1 – pursue the call for development of a strategic plan
- 1.2 – program committee to determine a working definition of interdisciplinarity
- 1.3 – examine various interdisciplinary “spaces for innovation” and communicate the Centre’s strengths and possible contributions
- 3.1 – require a Labour History course
- 3.2 – identify “core” course with a clear understanding of how they build towards a coherent major
- 3.3 – future core/elective courses should consider addressing labour in a particular part of the world
- 3.4 cross-listed courses need to be culled for labour relevance and labour content
- 3.5 consider offering selected core course in the evening and weekends
- 3.6 to ensure the learning objectives are being addressed every crosslisted and core course syllabus should include a section that reference anticipated student competencies
- 3.7 – consider development of a co-op option for eventual new majors
- 3.10 – splitting LABR 1F90 into 2 half credits courses

4.1 – Program Committee to approach CTLET to make a presentation with a view to providing a space within the committee’s regular course of affairs to discuss issues of teaching and its role in the Centre’s development

4.4 - involve more program committee members in core teaching and advising

5.1- The Library staff is very interested in helping the Labour Studies faculty, and the faculty should seriously consider taking up this offer.

7.1 – a new administrative service model to distribute tasks more widely

7.2 – have offices for members of the Centre closer to one another

**E. Recommendations that will not be Implemented**

2.5 – dedicated space – space remains a universal issue across campus, with relief only coming once new buildings are completed. There exists a ‘succession’ plan for the allocation of space moving forward.

**F. Recommendations to which the Centre did not respond**

3.8 – thesis/practicum or alternative capstone course

3.9 – in developing new courses in the future, consider the list suggested

**Appendix I**  
**Centre for Labour Studies**  
**Academic Program Review, December 2010**

**REVEIWERS RECOMMENDATIONS**

**1. Labour Studies and Brock's Strategic Vision: Recommendations**

- 1.1. **Recommendation:** That the Centre for Labour Studies rapidly pursue the call for the development of a Strategic Plan as outlined in Section III of the December 1, 2010 *Brock University Integrated Plan* document in order to benefit from any leadership possibilities to be gained from responding quickly to such an invitation.
- 1.2. **Recommendation:** It is evident that a number of different understandings of notions of interdisciplinarity (or in fact multi-, trans-, or post-disciplinarity) are in circulation at Brock University. During the process of the curricular review suggested below, consultation with the Program Committee to determine a working definition of interdisciplinarity that can help govern and stimulate the Centre's activities.
- 1.3. **Recommendation:** Closely examine the various interdisciplinary "spaces for innovation" proposed in the Brock University Integrated Plan document to determine which of these relate to the Centre's activities (*economic and social sustainability, globalized contexts, social justice and equity issues*, among others). Develop short and long-term strategies for communicating these resonances and intersections to relevant senior administrators, to other academics outside of the Centre working in these areas, and for developing the Centre's foci on these "spaces for innovation" where relevant.

**2. Scholarly Community: Recommendations**

- 2.1. **Recommendation:** The decanal administration, by its own formula, accepts that Labour Studies is first in line in the faculty for more faculty resources. The reviewers recognize that there are specific values to be accrued from either 100% appointments or cross-appointments to the Centre. The reviewers suggest that at least 2 (two) additional tenure-track positions. Although cross-appointments have the advantage of increasing the number of faculty directly involved in Labour Studies while recognizing current funding issues, as well as promoting interdisciplinary vitality, if the possibility for a full appointment arises, the kind of presence this could provide the Centre would of course also be very valuable. Appointments should add discipline, research interest, skill set, geographical and demographic diversity to the Centre. Recognizing popular cross-listed courses, along with incumbent co-majors and potentially dynamic new co-majors should also be relevant criteria in filling academic appointments.

- 2.2. **Recommendation:** Consideration should be given to creating and providing infrastructure support for a “Labour Studies Centre Research Consortium” (merely a suggested name) that could conduct theoretical and policy-oriented research. This can help build the profile of the research activities of the Centre for Labour Studies by drawing attention to the Labour related research being generated by members of the program committee and others home outside the Centre.
- 2.3. **Recommendation:** Establish a schedule of public presentations (e.g., once a month on a Friday) on research work authored by Labour Studies and Program Committee faculty. Students should be encouraged to attend and the time of the presentations should provide opportunities for student participation.
- 2.4. **Recommendation:** Once a calendar of presentations is arranged, it should be broadly promoted by the Faculty of Social Science.
- 2.5. **Recommendation:** To properly familiarize the campus with Labour Studies Centre research presentations a dedicated space should be found and agreed on. The space selected should be welcoming to students and advertise the “home” of the Centre.
- 2.6. **Recommendation:** To promote increased interest in the Labour Studies major and to highlight the importance of labour/work related scholarship the Centre should look for ways to publicly promote undergraduate student scholarship, research interest and practical experience. A student forum each semester could be arranged with special recognition from the Dean of Social Sciences.
- 2.7. **Recommendation:** Creating a Labour Studies student group should be encouraged - among other reasons - to demonstrate the validity of pursuing an academic career focused around ideas derived from work, workplace and labour force research.

### 3. Curriculum: Recommendations

- 3.1. **Recommendation:** The Centre should develop and require that all Labour Studies students take a Labour History course. The course could be offered on a half-year basis or as a full year. A full year course could be roughly divided into a pre and post period format with the second half focused on contemporary labour history.
- 3.2. **Recommendation:** Courses identified as “core” should be created with a clear understanding of how they build towards a coherent Labour Studies major.
- 3.3. **Recommendation:** Future core/elective courses should consider addressing labour in a particular part of the world. For example, areas could include South America, Asia, or the Euro Zone. Such a course(s) will provide students with a multi-national and international perspective and open up advanced areas of future study.



- 3.4. **Recommendation:** Courses cross-listed need to be culled for labour relevance and labour content. The following is a very incomplete list of courses that should be examined: “Canadian Economic Issues,” “Economic Geography,” “Introduction to Public Administration,” “State and Economic Life,” “Gender Practices of Resistance,” “Masculinity and Economy.”
- 3.5. **Recommendation:** The Centre should consider offering selected core courses in the evening and weekends on a rotating basis.
- 3.6. **Recommendation:** To insure that learning objectives are being properly addressed every cross-listed and core course syllabus should include a section that references anticipated student competencies.
- 3.7. **Recommendation:** Consider developing a co-op option for eventual new majors. This could assist with recruitment, retention, and also provide important experiential learning opportunities for students in workplace and internship settings.
- 3.8. **Recommendation:** Encourage students to do the thesis/practicum or introduce an alternative cap stone course.
- 3.9. **Recommendation:** When developing new courses in the future, consider the following list suggested by different people during the review process including: Occupational H&S, advanced arbitration/mediation course, theory course, capstone course, equity course (class, gender and race).
- 3.10. **Recommendation:** Consider splitting the first year course to give more students a chance to experience LS in their first year so they can major in year two. With a full year course, students must commit to the first year course in September. This likely leads to some potential LS students falling to find out about the program before September of year two by which time they are less likely to see Labour Studies as a potential major. This needs to be done keeping in mind that the decision to offer a year long year course was based on concerns that students were dropping out of the second half of the course because term one focused on history.

#### 4. **Pedagogy: Recommendations**

- 4.1. **Recommendation:** Approach the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Educational Technologies to make a presentation to the Program Committee with a view to providing a space within the committee’s regular course of affairs to discuss issues of teaching and its role in the Centre’s development.
- 4.2. **Recommendation:** Explore ways of facilitating a student culture of collective engagement with learning such as approaching some students to develop a Student Association.

4.3. **Recommendation:** Increase number of guest speakers to expose students to materials and individuals outside of more traditional learning formats.

4.4. **Recommendation:** Involve more Program Committee members in core teaching and advising.

## 5. **Library: Recommendations**

5.1. **Recommendation:** The Library staff is very interested in helping the Labour Studies faculty, and the faculty should seriously consider taking up this offer.

## 6. **Community Engagement: Recommendations**

6.1. **Recommendation:** As suggested above, further engagement could include the establishment of a research centre dedicated to local economic development issues and a capstone course that gives students an opportunity to be involved with local labour organizations.

## 7. **Governance/Administration of Centre: Recommendations**

7.1. **Recommendation:** That a retreat be organized with the Program Committee during which possibilities for a new administrative/service model be elaborated. Reflecting the Centre's move away from a self-described 'survival stage' into a more sustainable period, a new administrative/service model will distribute certain tasks more widely so as to provide the Director and the cross-appointed Faculty member with more support. Distributed tasks could include organizing speakers or university student fairs, teaching cross-listed courses, and community outreach.

7.2. **Recommendation:** Explore the potentials and benefits of having the Director, administrative assistant, and the cross-appointed Faculty member have offices closer to one another.

7.3. **Recommendation:** Involve Labour Studies students on the Centre's Program Committee.

## 8. **COMMENTS ON THE PROCESS**

8.1. **Recommendation:** Given the heavy reliance on sessional and part-time instructors it might have been useful to speak with one or two of the regular sessional instructors. By limiting our access to regular faculty, we only spoke to one faculty member who actually teaches a core Labour Studies course.

8.2. **Recommendation:** Given Labour Studies efforts to reach out to the local labour community it would have been helpful to speak with a local labour official who has had contact with the Centre.

8.3. **Recommendation:** Finally, the turnout at the student session was relatively low (3 students). Part of this can be explained by the timing of the visit in the last week of term. The low turnout may also have been a result of not using fully the Centre Director to appeal to students. In the future, it might be useful to ensure that someone the students have a relationship with plays a larger role in student recruitment.