

# Final Assessment Report Academic Review

# **Canadian Studies**

# A. Summary

- 1. The Centre's Self Study was considered and approved by the Academic Review Committee of Senate on February 16, 2011.
- 2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Claire Campbell (Dalhousie University) and Colin Coates (York University), and an internal reviewer, Tony Ward (Economics).
- 3. The site visit occurred on March 7-9, 2012.
- 4. The Reviewers' Report was received on April 25, 2012.
- 5. The Centre's response was received on May 25, 2012.
- 6. The Dean of Humanities' response from Douglas Kneale was received on June 25, 2012.

The academic program which was examined during the review was the BA in Canadian Studies.

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on June 6, 2011.

The reviewers assigned the programs: Outcome Category 3, "Good Quality with Concerns."

## B. Strengths of the Program

The reviewers stated that the Canadian Studies program is a "living example" of "real multidisciplinary practice." They described how the program "creates an open-ended exploration of Canada on the one hand, and the arts and social science disciplines on the other." They noted that it clearly provides a "space for the university to connect to the community, to explore and engage with issues of current societal and political concern in a transdisciplinary context." Finally, they recognized that the geographical position of Brock in Niagara, with its proximity to the United States, provides a unique opportunity for the exploration of the "international context" of Canadian Studies and the theme of "borders."

The reviewers took note of "the astonishing number of undergraduate students" enrolled in program courses, while acknowledging that "few choose to enroll as majors." The instructors were described as "dedicated" and "enthusiastic" and the reviewers heard "excellent comments about the quality of the seminars in the upper-year classes." The reviewers were "impressed by the dedication of the directors, instructors and support staff, and strongly encouraged by the administration that Brock recognizes the pedagogical value of Canadian Studies."

The reviewers stated that "the arc formed by the core courses is eminently reasonable, and succeeds in providing students with both a broad introduction to national and international questions pertaining to Canada and small-group engagement with particular and particularly appropriate questions of local significance." They noted "wonderful examples of creative course design and incorporating new learning and teaching resources." They also pointed out that Brock is hosting two internationally significant conferences, the annual "Two Days of Canada" conference and the 2014 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences.

## C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers provided 13 discrete recommendations grouped into four categories: Faculty and Staffing, Curriculum and Programme, Communications, and Administration and Programming. The Centre did not address the recommendations individually, but submitted a generalized response with a four-point "Summary of Actionable Items" at the end.

1. (Faculty and Staffing) As resources allow, we recommend that the administration consider identifying a future hiring as a cross-appointment between a department in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Canadian Studies programme.

The Centre supported the recommendation, stating that it would facilitate "increased Social Sciences content," create "the potential for a more coherent multidisciplinary degree experience for faculty and students," and provide a "more stable BUFA contingent in the program." Such an appointment would also "greatly improve [the Centre's] community outreach through increased participation in preview days, conferences, and other community-based initiatives" and would "significantly improve [the Centre's] ability to attract students to Brock."

The Dean noted the lack of available funding from either the Faculty of Humanities or Social Sciences for a new hire. He suggested that the Centre seek "fuller participation from some of the existing faculty members" in Social Sciences who specialize in Canadian issues. The Dean felt that "the Program response places too great a set of expectations and fixes...on one slender cross-appointment."

Therefore, ARC considers this recommendation to be not accepted due to a lack of resources.

## Implementation Plan

Recommendation NOT accepted.

2. (Faculty and Staffing) We recommend the Faculty Advisory Committee consider new means for involving Canadianists at Brock in the classroom and academic life of the Canadian Studies programme.

The Centre did not address this recommendation directly; however, it acknowledged the "perceptible drift of the program towards the Humanities, and away from the Social Sciences."

The Dean suggested that the Centre as a whole should direct its energy and concern toward encouraging more participation from Social Sciences faculty. He recommended identifying "what would need to be done in order to facilitate greater faculty participation, and work with the two Deans to provide sensible remedies."

Therefore, ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of being implemented.

Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre, Deans of Humanities and Social Sciences

Responsible for resources: Centre, Deans of Humanities and Social Sciences

Responsible for implementation: Centre, Deans of Humanities and Social Sciences

Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by end of academic year

2012/13

3. (Faculty and Staffing) As Brock's Canadian Studies programme relies a great deal on contract instructors, long term contract instructors should continue to be consulted regularly on issues related to the shape and content of the undergraduate programme. The webpage should be updated with the instructors' names once their contracts are signed.

The Centre did not provide comment on the first part of the recommendation. It acknowledged criticism "of our quickly and perpetually out-of-date website" and listed an annual review of the Centre's website as one of its "Actionable Items".

The Dean suggested that "as the contract with CUPE secures many rights of continuance to contract instructors, it would seem to the Dean that the Program Committee would as a matter of course include key contract people in its deliberations." He encouraged the Centre to manage "more than an annual review in keeping information on instructors and the Program current" on the website.

Therefore, ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

## Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre
Responsible for resources: Centre
Responsible for implementation: Centre

4. (Curriculum and Programme) Consider team-teaching elements for IF91: such as sharing teaching between a cross-appointed humanist and a cross-appointed social scientist, or building in guest lectures by other faculty to showcase different disciplinary perspectives.

The Centre stated that it would "also explore the possibility of integrating team-teaching methods into our curriculum."

The Dean stated that CANA IF91 was usually taught by a "single person, homed in History" but noted that History is often considered a social science at other institutions. The Dean suggested that "team-teaching in Year 1 courses has had mixed success", but he encouraged "the Program to investigate, at the least, the introduction and engagement of distinctly social science perspectives through guest lectures."

ARC considers that the core recommendation (to include "different disciplinary perspectives") has been accepted and is in the process of implementation. The Committee also believes that the Centre is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to achieve this objective.

## Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre

Responsible for resources: Centre

Responsible for implementation: Centre

5. (Curriculum and Programme) Communicate the shape and "raison d'être" of the curriculum to the Faculty Advisory Committee so they can assist with promoting Canadian Studies to students. The Director may schedule a curricular-planning session with members of the Faculty Advisory Committee and the teaching faculty to discuss aspects of the program curriculum.

In its response, the Centre stated that it would "commit to undertaking a systematic review of our curriculum at each of the four year levels with the goal of creating a more cohesive and logical degree experience." The Centre specifically placed "strategic changes to our second and third year courses" and "transforming CANA 4P00 into a required research colloquium" as two of its "Actionable Items."

The Dean suggested that the Faculty Advisory Committee would not require communication regarding the shape and "raison d'être" of the curriculum, as "that body is in fact responsible for the Program." He considered the Centre response to the suggestion of a curriculum review to be "positive" and indicated his support for such an endeavour.

Given that the majority of the core courses in Canadian Studies are taught on stipend by instructors who are not members of the Faculty Advisory Committee, it is evident that there is a need for communication and continuity. ARC thus finds the essence of the recommendation (to strengthen communication and to schedule curricular-planning sessions) to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

#### Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre, Faculty Advisory Committee
Responsible for resources: Centre, Faculty Advisory Committee

Responsible for implementation: Centre, Faculty Advisory Committee

6. (Curriculum and Programme) Draw upon the new students in the Master's Programme in Canadian-American Studies specifically for teaching assistants for the large first-year class and coordinating events and activities to cultivate a sense of programme identity.

The Dean stated that it was his expectation, and assumed that it was also the Centre's expectation, that the new MA program "will accommodate its graduate students in CANA Teaching Assistant assignments where possible."

Therefore, ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

#### Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre

Responsible for resources: Centre

Responsible for implementation: Centre

7. (Curriculum and Programme) The administration could explicitly acknowledge its support for the programme, and not use "counting majors" as the only criterion upon which Canadian Studies is evaluated.

The Dean stated that "[c]ounting majors is in fact not the only criterion upon which Canadian Studies is evaluated. Due notice is taken of, for example, overall student demand and enrolments, strength of faculty engagement and support, and alignment with the strategic goals of the University."

For the reason noted by the Dean, ARC considers this recommendation to be consistent with existing practice and no further action is required.

## Implementation Plan

No further action required.

8. (Communications) Promote Canadian Studies as a feature of the Brock Experience. Make available an appropriate budget for advertising and utilize the expertise of the university's Marketing and Communications in a campaign that features such unique initiatives as the collaboration with SUNY-Buffalo.

In his response, the Dean stated that he "assumes that this recommendation has the implicit support of the Program", and that he supports it as well. He noted that "The University continues to feature the binational elements of the Program and its involvement in the Niagara region."

Thus, ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

#### Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre

Responsible for resources: Centre, Marketing and Communications

Responsible for implementation: Centre, Marketing and Communications

9. (Communications) The Director and administrator should continue their efforts to increase the number of co-majors and minors, by sending letters to top students in the early core courses; having the director visit classroom to try to recruit students, and having full- and part-time instructors continue to encourage students to enroll in the program.

The Centre did not respond to this recommendation directly, stating only that an additional 0.5 position would "significantly improve our ability to attract students to Brock."

The Dean stated that he "remains convinced that a collegial effort by faculty engaged in (inter-) disciplinary study as it relates to Canada is the best way to move forward." He did not believe that the 0.5 position would significantly increase the Centre's "capacity to represent itself in recruitment."

Therefore, ARC considers that the recommendation (to encourage enrolment in the program) has been accepted and is in the process of implementation. Again, the Committee believes the Centre is in the best position to determine appropriate strategies to achieve this objective.

#### Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving: Director

Responsible for resources: Centre

Responsible for implementation: Director

10. (Communications) The Social Science advisor should be brought into discussions about the programme, especially about how to bolster the number of students enrolling in the major. Dedicate more energy to attracting first- and second-year students to enroll as co-majors in Canadian Studies instead of encouraging applicants from high school.

In his response, the Dean noted that "there is no Social Science advisor 'per se'" for Canadian Studies. He agreed "that recruitment to the Program from the Year 1 course may be the most promising way to go, and hopes that the addition of two concentrations and exchange possibilities will give the Program more sense of focus for students and more drawing power." With regard to engaging high school teachers, the Dean stated that it would be left "to the Program Committee in communication with Recruitment and Liaison personnel to decide if and to what extent it is advisable."

Therefore, ARC considers that the recommendation (to seek ways to attract majors and comajors) has been accepted and is in the process of implementation. The Committee believes the Centre is in the best position to determine appropriate strategies to achieve this objective.

# Implementation Plan (Second Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre
Responsible for resources: Centre

Responsible for implementation: Centre

11. (Communications) The Centre for Canadian Studies should continue to act as a clearing house for Canadian Studies activity at the university, including pursuing with the Library the creation of a dedicated and consistently updated webpage of publications by Brock's Canadianists.

In its response, the Centre offered to annually review the Centre's website in order to keep it up-to-date. It stated that this would "include communicating with all members of the FACCS [Faculty Advisory Committee of Canadian Studies] and affiliated Canadianists in order to determine who is available for supervisions and on what topics they are willing to supervise."

The Dean stated that "It appears from the Program's Actionable Item 4 that the unit is taking up this recommendation, which the Dean supports."

On that basis, ARC considers that the recommendation (to have the Centre regularly collect and disseminate information on Canadian Studies activities across the university) has been accepted and is in the process of implementation.

#### Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre

Responsible for resources: Centre

Responsible for implementation: Centre

12. (Administration and Planning) It would be efficient to partner with departmental representatives on the Faculty Advisory Committee and department chairs to structure jointly sponsored cross-departmental activities, events and course recognition.

The Dean of Humanities noted that the Centre did not respond directly to this recommendation which "is itself somewhat vague." He stated that "Certainly [the] Dean supports cooperation across participating units. Indeed, the success of 'Two Days of Canada' over the past 26 years illustrates the power of such cooperation."

On that basis, ARC considers this recommendation to be consistent with existing practice and no additional action is required.

#### Implementation Plan

No further action required.

13. (Administration and Programming) Request a small guaranteed financial contribution to the "Two Days of Canada" conference from decanal budgets or the provost's office, which would provide an incentive for other scholars at Brock to contribute their efforts to the annual event.

The Dean of Humanities stated that "This is a discussion that the Dean is willing to have with the organizers of 'Two Days of Canada'."

On that basis, ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (First Priority)

Responsible for approving: Centre

Responsible for resources: Dean of Humanities, other participating Deans and

Units, Provost

Responsible for implementation: Centre

# D. Recommendations to be Implemented

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

First Priority:

Recommendations 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 13

**Second Priority** 

Recommendations 5, 6, 8, 10

No further action required (recommendation consistent with existing practice): Recommendations 7, 12

## E. Recommendations that Will Not be Implemented

Recommendation 1

November 27, 2012